MOTHER NATURE STORIES

A BOOK OF THE BEST NATURE STORIES THAT MOTHERS CAN TELL THEIR CHILDREN

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FEEDING THE DUCKS.

MOTHER NATURE STORIES

A Book of the Best Nature Stories That Mothers Can Tell Their Children

With Ninety-six Illustrations

PHILADELPHIA
HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

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MOTHER STORIES SERIES

MOTHER STORIES

A Book of the Best Stories that Mothers can tell their Children

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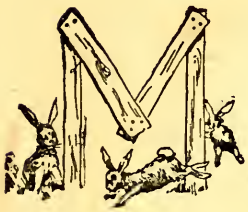
CONTENTS

	PAGE
Mrs. Henny-Pen's Strange Son,	7
The Little Provider,	9
How Tiddlety-Winks was Fed,	12
A Funny Pony,	14
A Late Spring,	16
A Cat's Paradise,	17
Charlie,	19
Cricket,	21
The Ant's Milch Cows,	22
The Crow Thief,	24
Monkeys in India,	26
Pussy's Bath,	28
The Dog Kindergarten,	29
The Pea-Hen,	31
The Chickadee-Dee,	32
A Letter From Italy,	33
A Clever Pig,	35
The Ant Eater,	36
Birds in January,	38
The Angry Bobolink,	39
The Orang-Utan,	40
The Obedient Elephant,	41
A Chicken With a Wooden Leg,	42
Old Silver Heels,	45
An Acrostic,	46
Birds in February,	47
The Chimney Swallow,	48
Felix, The Alligator,	51
Ted and His Calf,	53
All About a Little Humming-Bird,	55

	PAGE
Tino,	57
Birds of Paradise,	58
Mud-Turtle,	60
A Bad Beginning,	62
The Hoopee,	64
Speckle's Nest,	65
The Pitcher Plant,	66
Mary and the Ducks,	67
The Walking Leaves of Australia,	68
The Pelicans,	69
How the Mason Wasps Work,	70
Flowers That Love The Sun,	72
Venus's Fly-Trap,	73
A Crocus Story,	74
The Black Sheep,	77
Do You Really?	78
The Tale of the Moral Little Doggy	79
The Bluebell Fairies,	82
The Polar Bear,	83
The Lantern-Fly,	84
Night Flowers,	86
The Working Tools of Insects,	87
The Lady's Slipper,	88
The Dragon-Fly,	90
The Skaters,	92
Jack Frost,	93
Tipsy, Topsy, Tee,	94
The English Cuckoo,	95
The Garden Bird,	96

MOTHER NATURE STORIES

MRS. HENNY-PEN'S STRANGE SON.



RS. HENNY-PEN stood looking at her one "**chick**" with a puzzled expression. "I declare," she said to herself, "if I did not know it, I would not believe that was my own child. His features are not at all like mine. His voice is very peculiar. It sounds,—well, it does not sound in the least like mine."

Her "child," in other words her "chick," was scratching in the ground near by.

Mrs. Henny-pen called to him, "cluck! cluck! cluck!" said she. Then she cocked her head on one side listening for his answer. But he seemed to pay no attention to her. "Cluck! cluck! cluck!" cried Mrs. Henny-pen again in a very decided tone.

The little downy ball lifted up its head and answered his mother more distinctly than he had ever done in his short life.

At the sound of his voice Mrs. Henny-pen stood still, and, if ever a hen's face expressed astonishment as well as horror, her face expressed it then.

The sound that came from the strange, long bill of her one child was not what she had hoped for. The downy little ball answered her own "cluck! cluck! cluck!" with a "*quack! quack! quack!*"

Mrs. Henny-pen sat down to think. She feared that some one had played a trick on her. The egg she had sat on so patiently, and from which she had hatched her one "chick," must have been a duck's egg. The "chick" she loved was not a "chick" at all, but an ugly duckling.

Mrs. Henny-pen sat thinking so long that she fell asleep. When she awoke there was no sign of either a "chick" or a duckling. "He has gone to the pond," she cried, and off she ran as fast as she could, frightened almost out of her wits. Sure enough, there was her baby swimming away as easily as possible.

Mrs. Henny-pen watched him at first with an anxious face. He seemed so much at home, however, that she became calm. "I declare," she said to herself, "he is a strong little fellow, and how well he paddles. On the whole I am proud of him." The duckling, seeing his mother on the shore, had the good sense to return to her. As he came out of the water she said: "Well done, my son, very well done for the first time. To-morrow you shall try again. And they both went back to the farmyard as contented as possible. "After all," said Mrs. Henny-pen to herself, "there is n't another hen in the yard with a son like mine."

PATTY-SAYINGS.

"Who drew you your dollies?" I asked Pattykins,
"They 're lovely — who made you those beautiful twins?"
"Oh, Dora drew *outlines* — the body and head —
And I made the *inlines*," our Pattykins said.

THE LITTLE PROVIDER.

YOU know what is meant, do you not, by providing for a family? Your father and mother provide for you. They provide for you by giving you a home and food to eat, and clothes to wear, and books to read. They also provide a great many pleasures for you. You surely remember the happy Christmas and the birthdays when your mother and father provided for you so many beautiful gifts, and pleasant pastimes, and games, and company, and everything which could make you a happy little boy or girl.

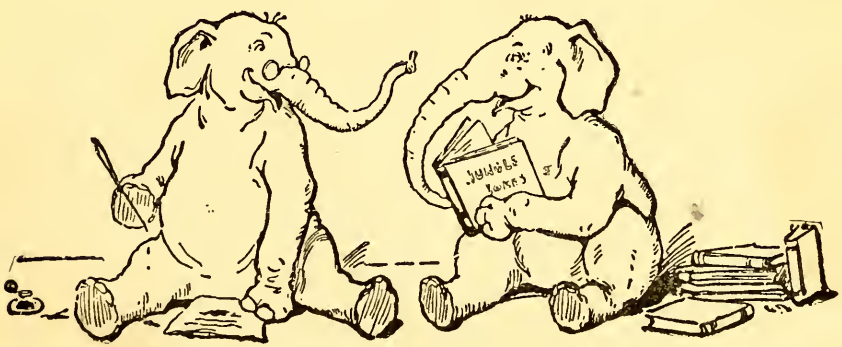
Now the little harvest mouse, or as it is sometimes named the little field mouse, is a very good provider. She never forgets her little children but gives them plenty to eat whenever she can find it. It is true that she does not buy clothes for them as your mother does for you, because Nature has already given all little mice a warm, fur coat, so that they do not need any more clothing. But the little mother knows that the dear little things must have something to eat, so she

looks about to get food for them. Look at the picture? There she is with her family in a wheat-field. She is telling them where to go and how to climb so as to get some good, rich wheat for dinner, and, no doubt, for breakfast and supper too.

Do you wonder how they are able to climb such a slender stem as a wheat straw? It is because the mouse is so small when it is full-grown, that it only weighs the sixth part of an ounce. What a tiny creature! And if that is the size of the mother, how very small must the little children be! So you see a wheat straw does not seem very slender to them. It holds them very securely while they are nibbling the grain, and they are so small that the farmer very often does not see them when he walks or rides over his field.

This good mother not only provides food for her little ones, but a very fine home. Her house is a ball, which she hangs upon wheat straws or grass stems, and very often to a thistle head. This little house is woven of slender grasses, and is hollow inside, of course, so as to give room to the family. You could not find the door to this little house. There is no door-bell or knocker, for they do not wish visitors. But the mother knows where the door is, and she slips in and gives food to all her little children. Besides grain she feeds them with insects, so the little ones have meat as well as bread. Do you not think this mother a good provider?

Look at her house. You could not hang a ball on a thistle head any better, yourself, than this tiny creature has done for the comfort of her family.



HOW TIDDLETY-WINKS WAS FED

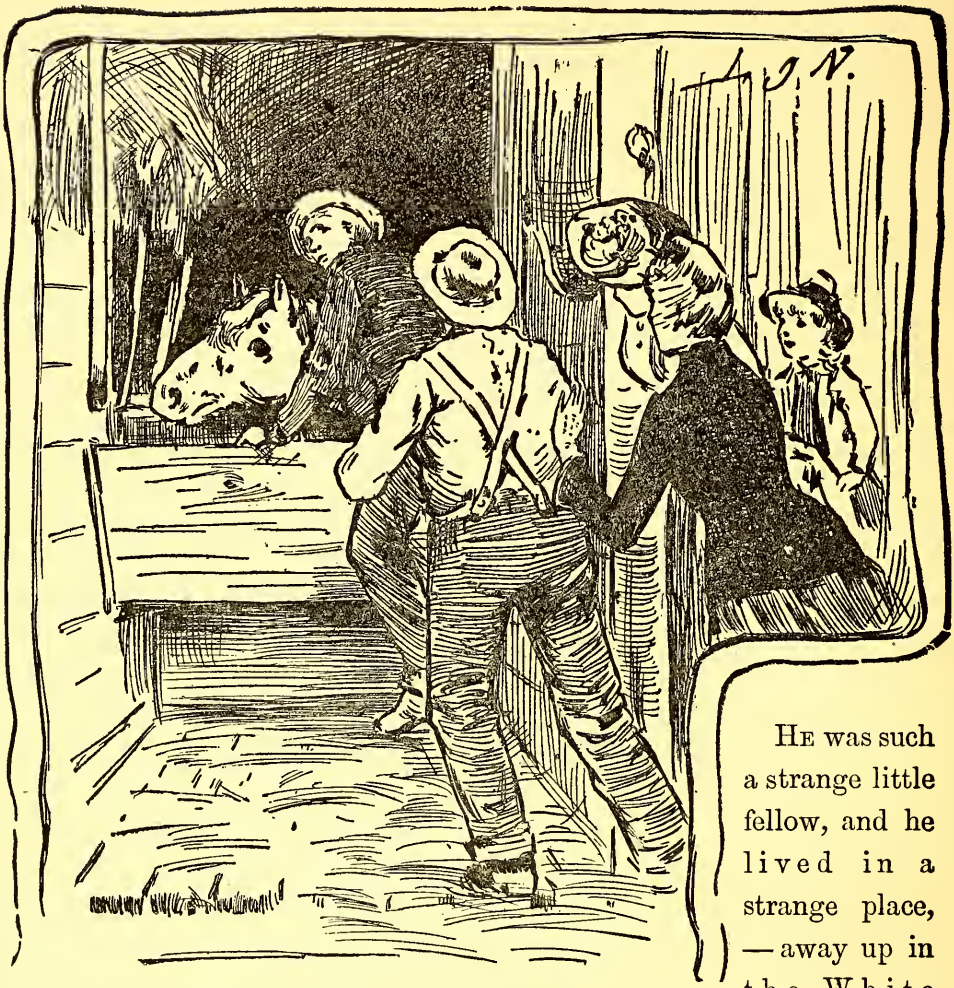
A HUMMING-BIRDIE'S tongue is like a fine thread. At first Mrs. S. would take the little fellow on her finger, dip the straw in the syrup, which was made of sugar and water, and hold the straw close to birdie's beak. Tiddlety-winks would stick out this long, thread-like tongue and lick the straw.

After he had been with them some days, Mrs. S. would prepare a little bottle of syrup each morning and lay it on the table. Soon

the wee humming-bird learned this was his, and if he were hungry before any one thought to feed him, he would hop down and peck at the bottle till some one fed him; which was done by merely uncorking the bottle and holding it so he could stick his little bill in and lap the syrup with his tongue.

By and by, when Tiddlety-winks had grown quite big for a humming-bird, a little sugar was left out for him to eat when he wished, and sometimes he was held up to the window to catch the little gnats.

A FUNNY PONY.



He was such a strange little fellow, and he lived in a strange place, — away up in the White Mountains, at the Tip-Top House. The ladies used to ride him, and he grew tired of it. When he saw any one coming to catch him, he went limping off as if he were so lame he could hardly walk.

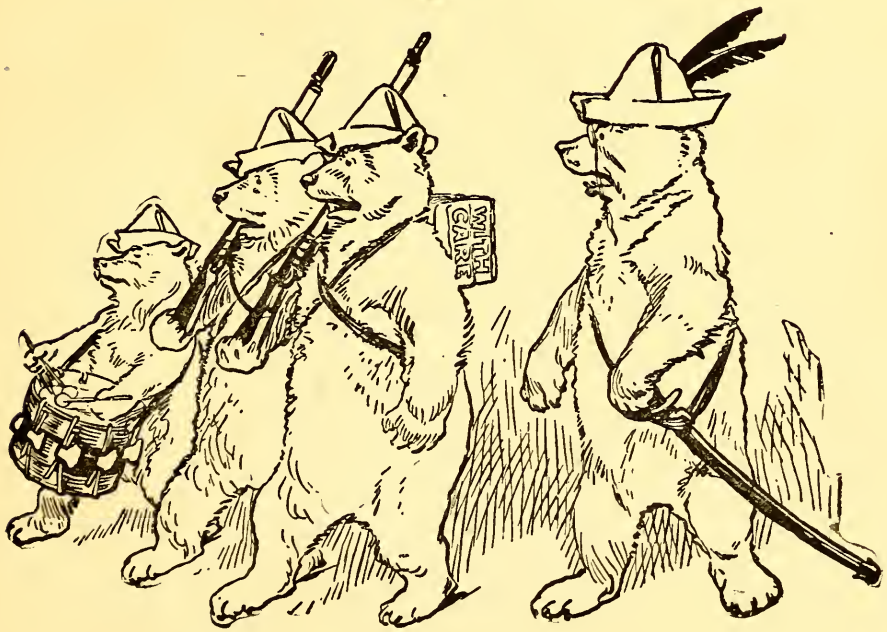
One day a new man was sent to catch him, who did not know his tricks.

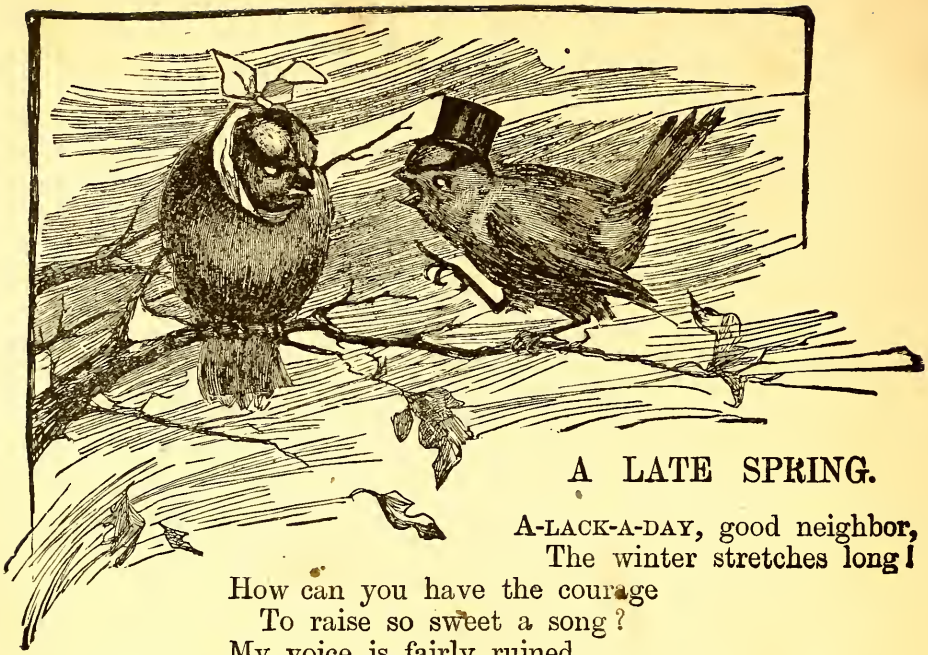
"I did not catch the pony," he said, when he came back, "because he is so lame no one could ride him." Then how the men laughed!

One day when the men opened the stables, the pony was gone, and they thought some one had stolen him.

But at last they heard him chewing, and after they had hunted a long time, they found him over in behind his manger. He jumped over in there, and when he couldn't get out again, he just lay there and reached up and ate the hay that fell over so he could get at it.

They had to get hammers and axes and pry off the boards before they could get him out.

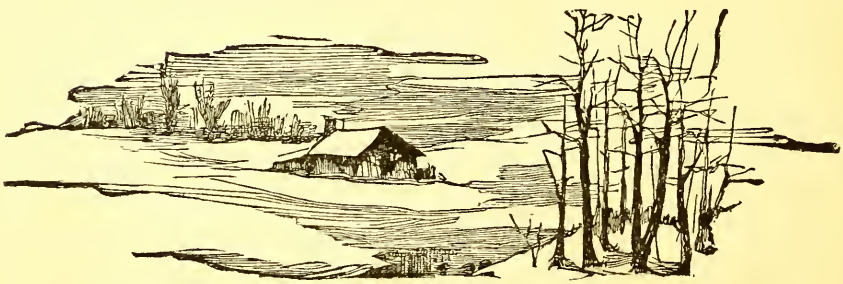




A LATE SPRING.

A-LACK-A-DAY, good neighbor,
The winter stretches long!
How can you have the courage
To raise so sweet a song?
My voice is fairly ruined
By this cold that's in my head,
And food's so scarce — why, really,
I can't find a crumb of bread.

Oh! come now, brother sparrow,
What's the use of feeling blue,
When winter's sturdy backbone
Is almost broke in two?
Our coldest snap is over —
The spring will soon be here,
With gentle showers, and dainty flowers,
With plenty and good cheer!



A CAT'S PARADISE.

EVA'S dearest pet is a white kitten. Last summer the little girl took Snowball into the country; for a vacation without her would not be worth having.

On the train, seeing a child who sat opposite playing with a doll, Eva brought out Snowball from her cushioned basket, with a blue ribbon around her neck, and had her do some tricks. The lively creature was admired by everybody; even the other little mistress would have liked to swap her doll for the kitten.

Hardly three minutes after Eva and her mother arrived at the farm-house, which was to be their summer home, the former ran to the garden with her pet by her side. An astonishing thing happened then.

Eva had truly supposed she knew kitty's voice in all its tones, whether a purr, a gentle mew for milk, or—if I must expose the kitten's faulty temper—a squall from the window-sill, after dark, when a neighbor cat crept into the yard. But now Snowball set up a queer noise never heard from her pink mouth before.

Her pretty fur was all ruffled up, worse than if she had met the most hateful dog in town. Her tail, with all its hairs standing out, was as large as Eva's arm. Yet there was nothing to be seen that could excite her. Suddenly Snowball gave a bound into a bed of something green, where she tumbled about, crooning in a way that sounded fearful to her young mistress.

A pair of small boots were heard running upstairs.

"O mamma, come!" cried Eva; "come quick, please. Something is the matter with Snowball. I'm afraid she caught the hyderfogy from that poor dog the cars ran over, you 'member. When I call her she doesn't hear me at all."

When Eva returned to the spot with her mother, she wondered what it was that scented all the air; but a glimpse of Snowball caused her to forget all besides. One minute the kitten was rolling over, the next she was standing on her head. Indeed, a more crazy acting animal can scarcely be imagined.

"It's the catnip — don't you smell it?" said the farmer, smiling, as he watched the kitten's antics over the garden fence. "It jus' sets 'em on a spree; cats and catnip they agree — I didn't mean to make a rhyme. Let the creetur enjoy herself. There's a bigger bed of the mint back o' the barn. You can gather some and carry home, and any time your cat is ailin', you steep a little of the dried arb and give it in her milk, and see how brisk she'll be."

"Oh!" said Eva, with a sigh of relief, "I'm so glad she hasn't real hyderfogy. Dear, sweet Snowball, you shall just live in catamint."

CHARLIE.

He was a pretty bay horse. He would go so fast and hold his head up so proudly when he had on the new harness; but when they put on the old he hung his head and went very slowly.

When grandpa rode him he dropped his head and went along slowly, and the boys said he was studying his sermon, for grandpa was a minister.

When the baby was put on his back he stepped so carefully the boys used to say he thought Birdie was a basket of eggs.

But when Tom jumped on his back off went Charlie with a bound and flirt of his tail, pretending to bite at Rover, who jumped and barked about as happy as Tom or Charlie.

When they first bought him he would bite at Tom's sister Sarah; but she used to bring him a lump of sugar, or an ear of corn, and he got so friendly he would call for her every time he saw her.

One night it was very cold and they strapped the blanket on him in the stable, and someway it slipped down over his heels.

How frightened he was and how he did kick.

He was all of a tremble when Tom opened the door.

When they turned him loose in the barn-yard he pulled the pin out of the door, and went in and helped himself to oats, and when they put a button on the door he learned to turn that with his teeth.

One day they all went off to live somewhere else, and sold Charlie. Ever so long after, when Tom was going by where there was a lot of horses, one of them whinnied and tried to get away from his hitching-post and go over to him.

It was Charlie. And Tom went right over and put both arms around his neck and kissed him; and he didn't care if the people did see him do it.

THE SPILL.

THIS Jack and Jill came down the hill,
With apple baskets laden;
Jack met with such a dreadful spill,
It quite upset the maiden!

Though Jack slid quickly down the hill,
The apples rolled the faster;
Jack bruised himself, while frightened Jill
Cried, "Oh, what a disaster!"

CRICKET,
The Little Black Fiddler.

Out in the grass here, Baby Belle,
Look with your two bright eyes
and tell,
Can you see the boy who
fiddles so well?
"Creak! creak! creak! creak!"
Only this with an endless squeak!

He's a funny boy, so little and black,
With six good limbs to carry his pack,
His sharp knees thrust up over
his back,
And his eyes—a hundred or two,
it's said—
Bigger than all the rest of his head!

The Ant's Milch Cows.

DOES it not seem queer that such tiny insects as ants should keep cows, whole droves of them. They are called "aphides," and do not give real milk, but a sweet fluid, that with their suckers they draw from plants and trees. These odd insects make honey in their bodies like bees; they do not stow it away in a hive, but let it drop from two tubes just above the abdomen; some ants are always on hand to lap it up; sometimes they feel hungry for more,

so they smooth the cows first on one side then on the other, till the coveted juice drops on the leaf.

The yellow ants collect large herds of aphides that feed on the roots of grass and other plants, carry them down to their underground chambers and watch them carefully so that they may not escape. They are well tended and eat the sap from the roots that grow through the ant dwellings.

Some ants build mud walls around their cows to keep their neighbors from stealing them; others make a covered gallery between their nests and the cow pastures.

In winter the ants would often suffer with hunger if they did not have a herd of cows on hand. Very carefully they guard the eggs of the aphides, so that a large quantity of calves, as you might call them, will hatch out to take the place of the cows that die.

In the summer, when the cows are feeding some distance from the ant homes, the honey must be taken back to the nest. There are no milk buckets in this community, so each ant has to be its own pail; swallowing as much of the fluid as possible, they hurry home, where they bring it up again into their mouths. The nurse ants give it to the babies, and the workers take it to the queens and soldiers.

Ants always seem to know their own cows and will fight for days to keep those who have none from carrying their property away.

THE CROW THIEF.

Charley Martin had a pet crow, which he called Jet, because he was so black.

Jet was very fond of Charley, and would follow him every chance he had.

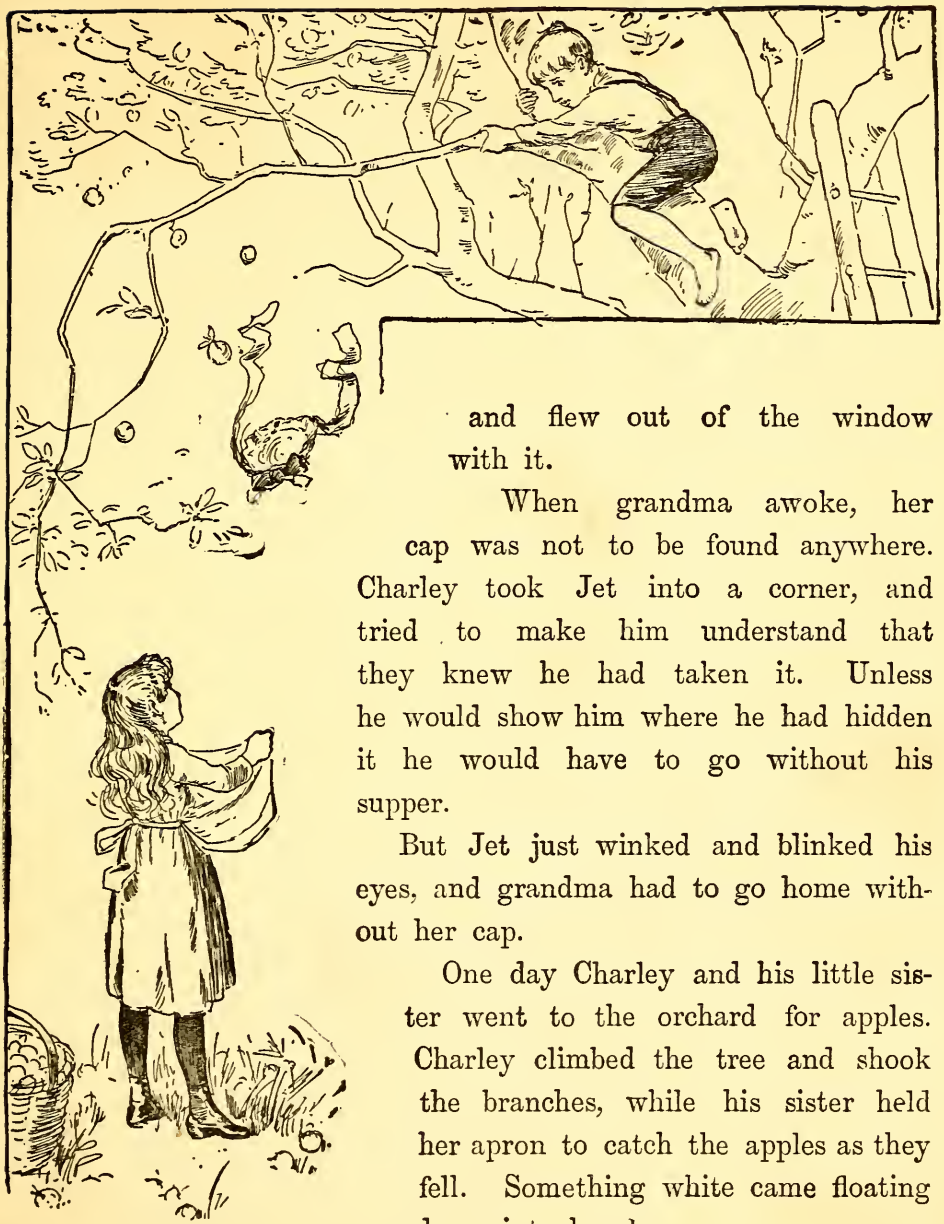
Often he would light on Charley's shoulder and go to school with him.

Sometimes, when Charley did not want Jet to go with him, he shut him up. Jet didn't like to be shut up and would make an awful cry.

The crow had one very bad trick,—he would steal, and hide the things in the strangest places. This gave Charley, his mother, and sister, a great deal of trouble hunting for them.

One day Charley's grandma came to visit his mother. After dinner she thought she would have a nap, so she took off her cap and laid it upon the table.

Jet had perched himself in an open window, and was watching grandma's cap very closely. He had never seen one before, and new things had a great attraction for him. Jet watched till he was alone, and then he flew to the table, caught the cap by one of the strings,



and flew out of the window with it.

When grandma awoke, her cap was not to be found anywhere. Charley took Jet into a corner, and tried to make him understand that they knew he had taken it. Unless he would show him where he had hidden it he would have to go without his supper.

But Jet just winked and blinked his eyes, and grandma had to go home without her cap.

One day Charley and his little sister went to the orchard for apples. Charley climbed the tree and shook the branches, while his sister held her apron to catch the apples as they fell. Something white came floating down into her lap.

What do you think it was? Grandma's cap! Jet had hung it on the apple-tree.

MONKEYS IN INDIA.

ONCE upon a time, when I was in India, I was staying at a place called Seringham. It was an island surrounded by two rivers,—one the Coleroon, the other the Cavery.

In this dry season we could walk very nearly across the rivers, excepting just where the stream ran, and there we had to cross over in round basket boats covered with the skin of some animal.

The first night the children and I were very tired, and soon went to bed. I woke up quickly, feeling that something was in the room. Then I heard a sound as of some one drinking water. I sat up in bed, and what do you think I saw? A large monkey helping himself out of the water-jug.

I threw one slipper, then the other, at him. He quietly picked them up and walked away with them. I called the ayah to run after the monkey, but she was too frightened. The next morning she came to me, saying, "Oh! please, ma'am, some thief has been to my box, and taken all my jaggery."

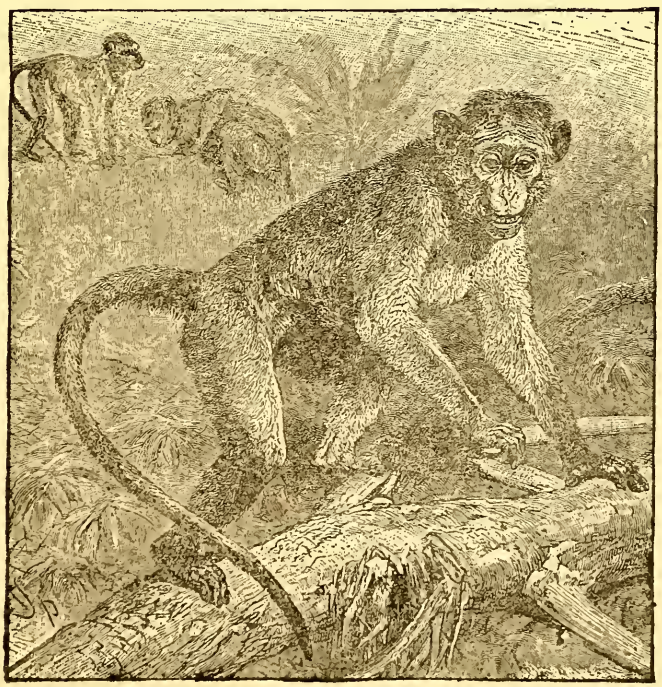
Jaggery, you must know, is the sugar the natives eat, made from the juice of the palmyra trees, and is a horrid brown mess to look at.

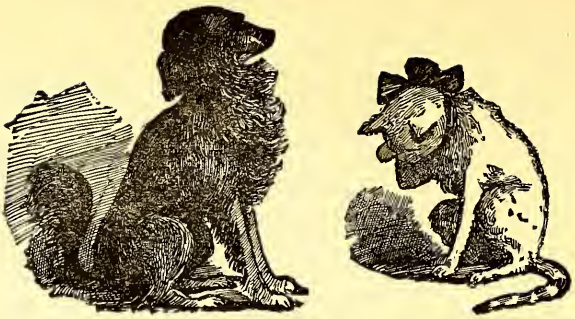
I went to look at the place where the ayah kept it, and found the cord had been untied from the box, and the jaggery taken away.

I gave the ayah a little money and told her to buy some more, and tie the box up well.

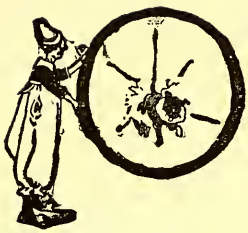
The next morning she found the box open and the jaggery gone again. So we watched and saw a monkey come, untie the cord, and help himself. The next morning, going into my bedroom, I found another monkey on my dressing-table with the violet powder all spilled out of the box. He was powdering his own baby monkey with the powder-puff.

The monkeys were so impudent we did not know what to do with them. I tried to poison some of them, by spreading the poison on some bread and butter; but the monkeys were so cunning that they rubbed the poison off against the trunk of the trees, and then ate up the bread. So that was no good. At last a friend of ours shot a few of these troublesome and unwelcome visitors; and after that they left us in peace for a little while.





PUSSY'S BATH.



ONE morning Tommy was at play
Beside the meadow pond,
Sailing his boats along its edge,
And up the brook beyond;

When good old puss came strolling down
The little winding path,
And seeing her he called, for sport,
"Come here and take a bath!"

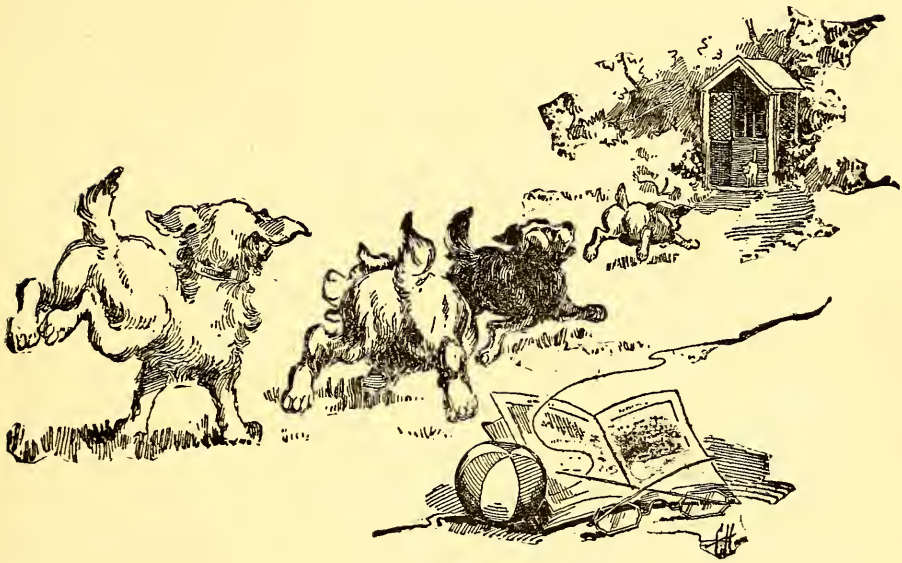
She came to him without a thought
That his designs were base—
When Tommy held her fast, and said,
"Now I will wash your face."

It seemed an easy thing to do—
He tried till, sad to tell,
They both slipped off the grassy bank,
And in the water fell.

From out the muddy bath,
Of which they had an equal share,
They scrambled quick, and hurried home
A sorry looking pair.

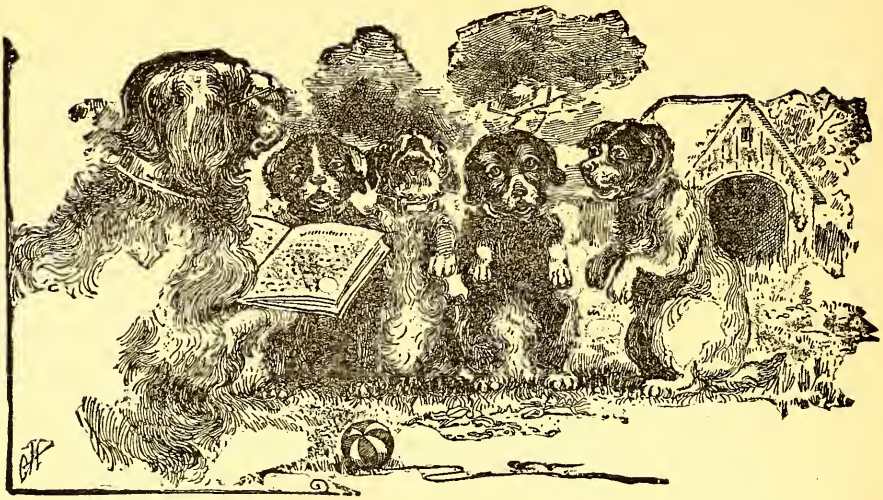
Old pussy climbed the garden wall,
And, angry at such fun,
Sat there and licked her sodden fur,
And dried it in the sun.

While Tommy, stripped and dressed anew
In shabby kilt and hat,
Thought he would never try again
That trick upon a cat.



THE DOG KINDERGARTEN.

MIDGET and Fidget, and Dumpy and Dun,
Were four little four-legged budgets of fun;
They had a red house at the foot of the lawn
Where they slept together from dark to dawn;
From dawn to dark they romped and ran,
Wrestled and tumbled till school began;



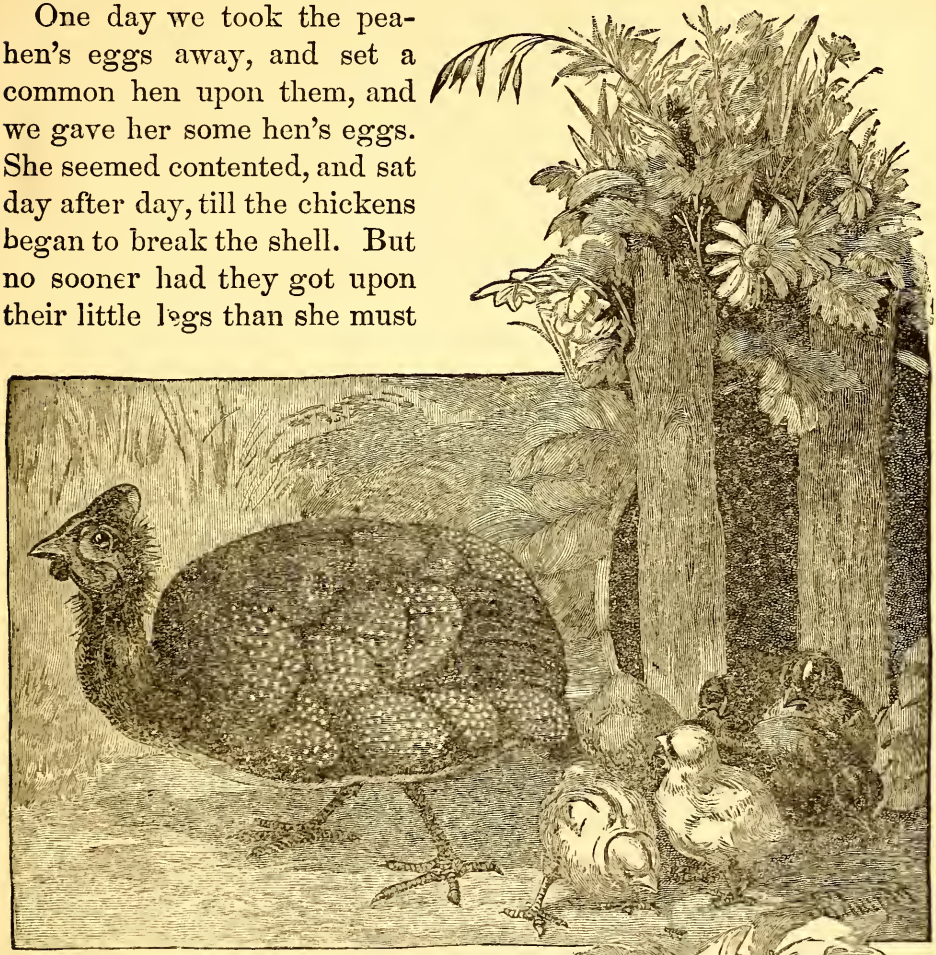
Then Floss, their mother, set all in a row,
To teach them the things that other dogs know,
And cuffed their ears if they spoke too low!

"First lesson in Bark! Attend now, hark:
Bow-wow! so, speak it up loud as I!"
"Yip, yap, yap, yip, boog-boo, ki-yi!"
"Yip-yip!" said Midget; "Yap-yap!" said Fidget;
"Boog-boo!" said Dumpy; "Ki-yi!" said Dun.
To the pupils this was lively fun;
And the second lesson was just begun
When they saw a pussy-cat out by the well;
Heels over head they went, pell-mell,
And the school broke up with a four-pup yell!

"There are some things," Mother Flossie thought,
"That little dogs know without being taught!"
But pussy was rather too spry to be caught.

YOUNG pea-chicks are very hard to bring up. They are delicate, and their mother, being of a roving disposition, leads them long tramps over hill and dale, and wears them out.

One day we took the pea-hen's eggs away, and set a common hen upon them, and we gave her some hen's eggs. She seemed contented, and sat day after day, till the chickens began to break the shell. But no sooner had they got upon their little legs than she must



have found that something was wrong, and that they were not pea-chicks. She straightway turned her back upon them, as much as to say, "You can't deceive me; barn-yard chickens are not pea-chicks;" and she walked off, and refused to feed or care for them.

THE CHICKADEE–DEE.

Little darling of the snow,
Careless how the winds may blow,
Happy as a bird can be,
Singing, oh, so cheerily,
Chickadee-dee! Chickadee-dee!

When the skies are cold and gray,
When he trills his happiest lay,
Through the clouds he seems to see
Hidden things to you and me.
Chickadee-dee! chickadee-dee!

Very likely little birds
Have their thoughts too deep for words.
But we know, and all agree,
That the world would dreary be
Without birds, dear chickadee!

A LETTER FROM ITALY.

DEAR FRANK:

Do you remember the crows that used to settle down on the corn-field last spring at grandpa's, and how we used to watch them from our window in the morning? Well, wouldn't you be surprised if some day when you looked out, instead of crows

you saw great long-legged birds four feet high? That is what I saw this morning. They are called cranes, and they are very pretty-all gray, with black breasts and necks. They live a long way from here, up in the north part of Europe, but in winter they fly south, just as the robbins do at home. In the autumn they come here in great flocks, and after they have rested for awhile they take their long flight across the Mediterranean Sea, and they don't come back until spring. They have to cross the sea to go any further south

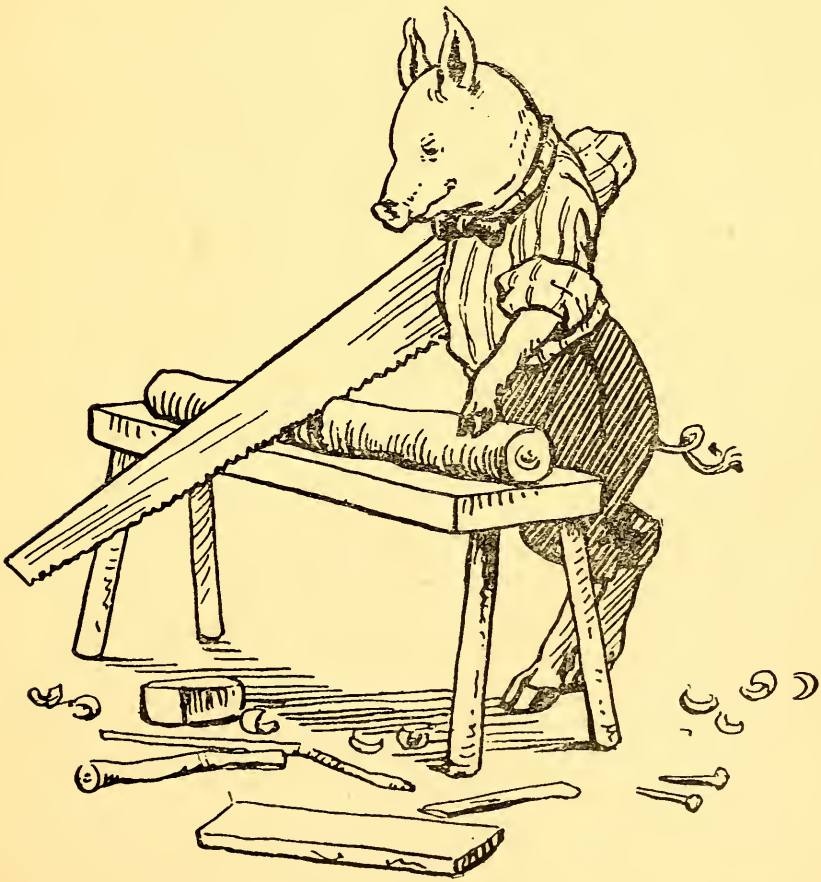
than this, you know. But here comes the funniest part of all. There are lots of other birds who go south beside the cranes, and some of them are too little for such a long flight; they would get tired half way across and would drop into the water and drown. How do you think they manage? Why, they just get on the crane's backs. Isn't that funny? And the cranes don't mind it one bit. I saw a lot go off yesterday, and they made me think of a lot of people going on a picnic, or else like the crowd getting on board the big steamer we sailed from New York in. They crowded on as close as they could, so close that some of them toppled off. But they did not seem to mind; just took another crane. Some get left behind, and these sit around in the hedges until the next flock of cranes start south. They will come back the same way in the spring. Give my love to Aunt Fanny and Uncle Tom.

Your affectionate cousin,

Arthur.

A CLEVER PIG

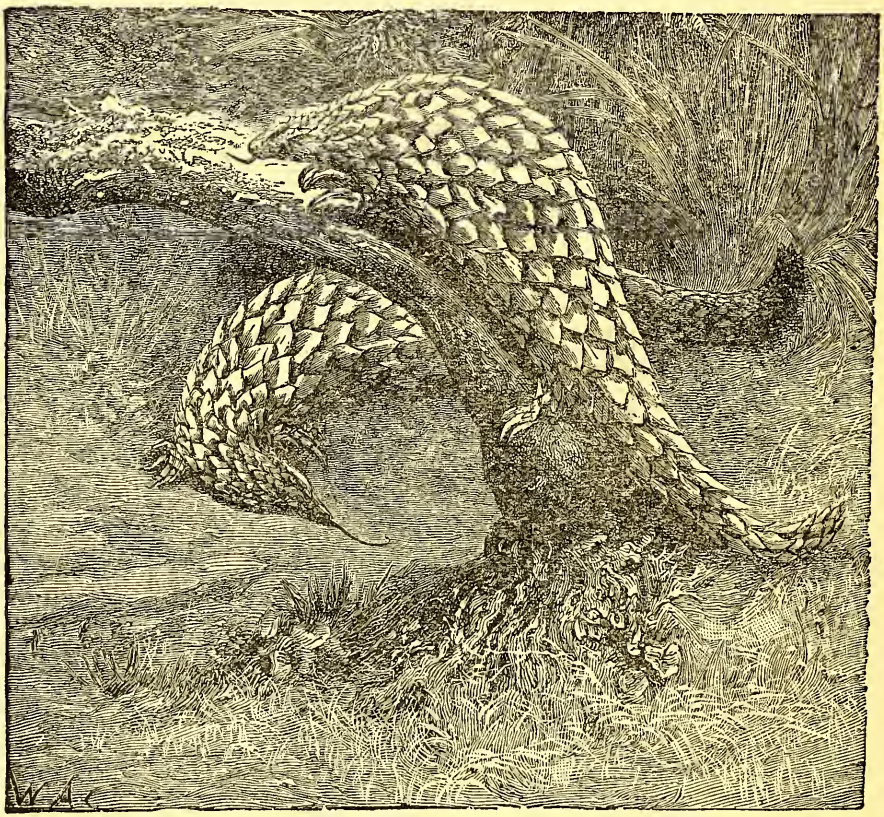
This clever pig, becoming tired of dwelling in a sty,
Resolved to build himself a house upon a mountain high;
He cut down trees, then sawed them up, and nailed them
fast together.
Now in his hut he lives content, regardless of the weather.



THE ANT-EATER.

WHAT do you think of this very queer looking creature? You surely do not think him very handsome, and perhaps your little brain is very much puzzled in trying to guess what he is and what he is made for. He has scales like a fish, but he is not a fish. Fish do not have feet, and I do not think you ever saw a fish up a tree, did you?

The name of this queer animal is the scaly ant-eater, and his home is in India. If you will look at your map you will see what a great distance he is from you, so you need not be afraid of him. He is about five feet long and has a long tail which helps him to hold on to the limb of a tree. The sight of him might frighten you,



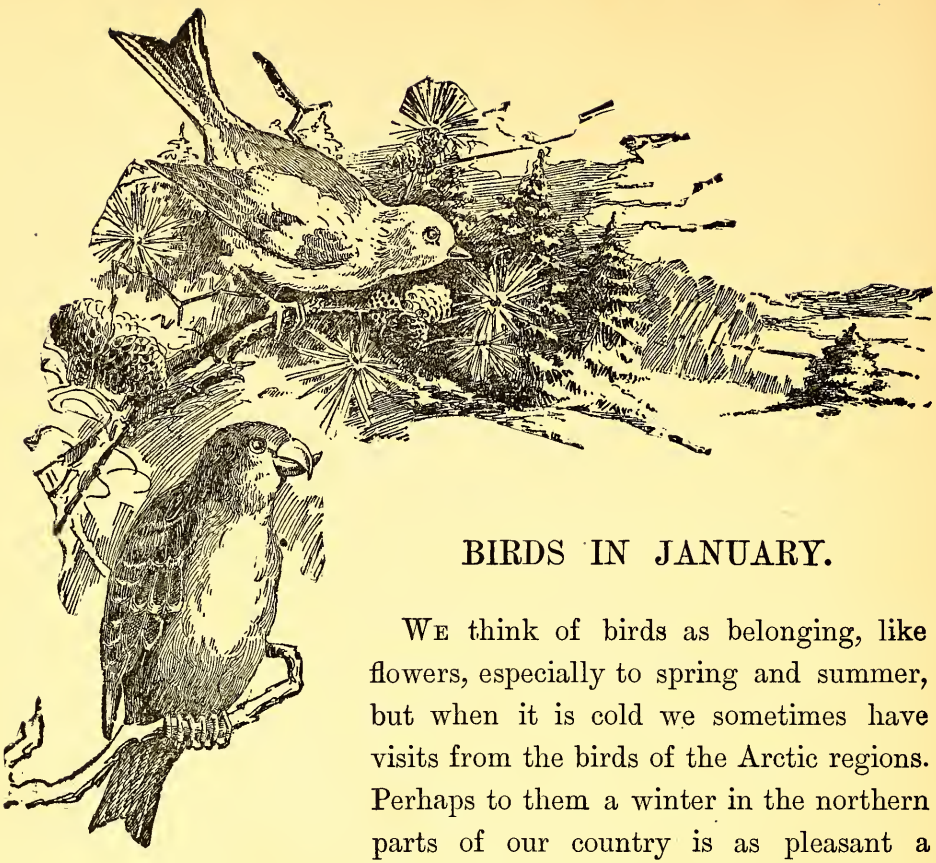
but he is a gentle creature, and is even shy. When he thinks some danger is nigh, he rolls himself into a ball, his tail folded up and his head in the centre. So you see you need not be afraid; he will not bite you, besides he has no teeth, for the food he eats does not need to be chewed.

Now you are wondering what his food is. Well, he lives upon ants, and that is why he is called the ant-eater.

His claws are long and his nails are hooked, so he is able to burrow into the ant-hills. There is a very sticky substance on his tongue and when the poor little ants are caught there, they cannot run away. They stick like a fly in molasses, and he swallows them.

There are other ant-eaters in South America, but they do not have scales on their backs. They are covered with hair, and are larger than this creature. He requires a great many ants for one meal, and he destroys a whole nest of ant-hills in a very short time. Ants do not seem to us to be very good food, and there is a very funny story told of an African savage who asked a white man if he had ever eaten anything as nice as ants. So you see he was an ant-eater too, although he did not have scales and go upon four feet.

The fore feet of this animal are longer than his hind feet, and his gait is very clumsy. How do you like his picture?



BIRDS IN JANUARY.

We think of birds as belonging, like flowers, especially to spring and summer, but when it is cold we sometimes have visits from the birds of the Arctic regions. Perhaps to them a winter in the northern parts of our country is as pleasant a change as Cuba is to us. The snow-bunting is one of these visitors, and I have seen a number of these charming little fellows flying and darting about in a snow-storm as if they enjoyed it. They are far-away cousins of the canary, and are in shape very like that bird. But they are not yellow. In winter they are snow-white save for brownish pink markings on the wings and head, and in summer they are gray.

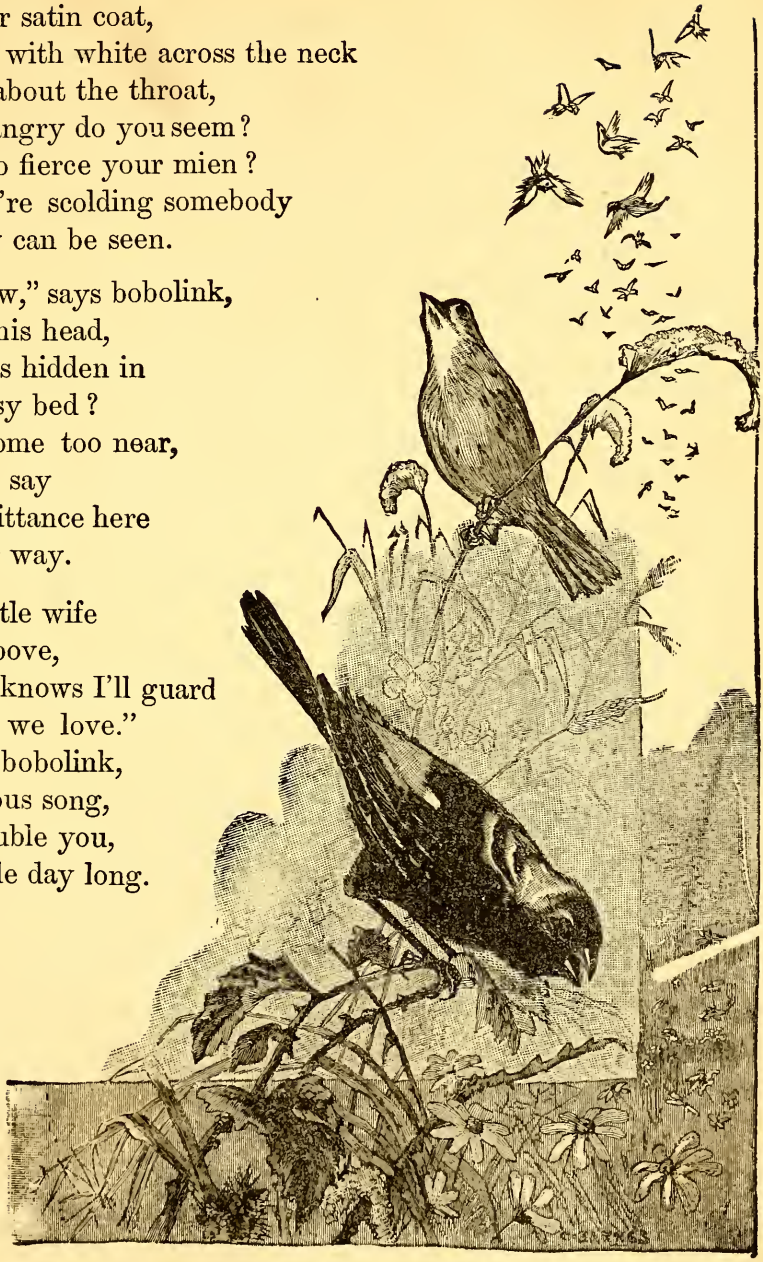
More rarely flocks of the red-headed cross-bill come. Very odd-looking birds are they, because, as their name indicates, their bills cross and make just the right sort of scissors to pick out fir seeds, which they are very fond of.

THE ANGRY BOBOLINK.

Pretty little bobolink
In your satin coat,
Trimmed with white across the neck
Black about the throat,
Why so angry do you seem?
Why so fierce your mien?
That you're scolding somebody
Plainly can be seen.

"Don't you know," says bobolink,
As he shakes his head,
"That my nest is hidden in
This soft grassy bed?
Somebody has come too near,
And I wish to say
There is no admittance here
Pass the other way.

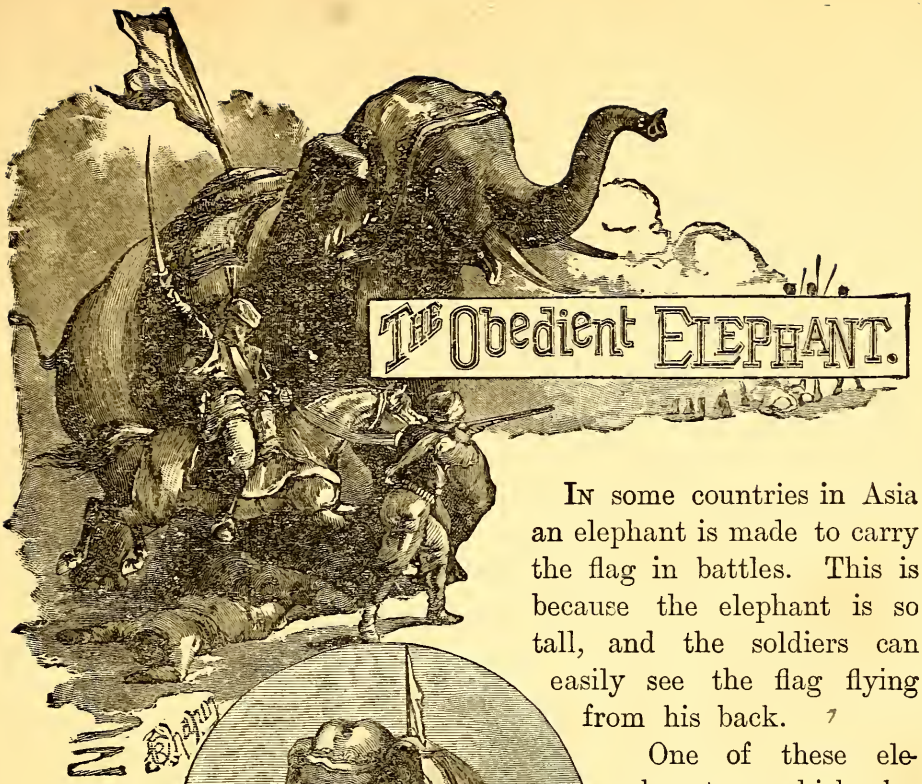
"If my gentle little wife
Sits so calm above,
'Tis because she knows I'll guard
This dear nest we love."
Fear not, pretty bobolink,
Sing your joyous song,
Never will I trouble you,
Sing, the whole day long.



THE ORANG-UTAN.

THE orang-utan is called the Wild Man of the Woods, because he resembles a man more than any other animal. He belongs to the ape family. He lives in Borneo and Sumatra. Now take your map and find those countries, so you will know the home of the orang-utan. He is fond of eating fruit and fresh green leaves and buds, and a cocoanut he esteems a great delicacy. He has strong teeth with which he bites off the outside covering of the cocoanut, then he pushes his claws or fingers through the soft spots at the end of the nut and drinks the milk. Then he strikes the nut against a tree or some hard substance and breaks the shell, and in this way he can devour several cocoanuts at one meal. His arms are very long and strong and help him to climb high trees and gather twigs and leaves. Few other animals are strong enough to fight him, so he is very fearless. He makes his bed of large leaves and ferns, and rises from it when the sun has dried the dew.

He can be quite sly, and is sometimes an artful thief. It happened one time that a captain of a vessel took one of these animals on board, and pretty soon he was caught stealing sugar from the table and candy out of the sailors' pockets. He was very quiet at meals and when he had emptied his bowl or glass, would reach it out to be filled again. He was quite well-behaved for a creature who had never sat at table before, and I think you will agree that there are some boys and girls who might learn table manners from him.



The Obedient Elephant.

In some countries in Asia an elephant is made to carry the flag in battles. This is because the elephant is so tall, and the soldiers can easily see the flag flying from his back.

One of these elephants, which belonged to the Poona host, was very brave and very kind, but he would obey the order of no one except his mahout, or driver.

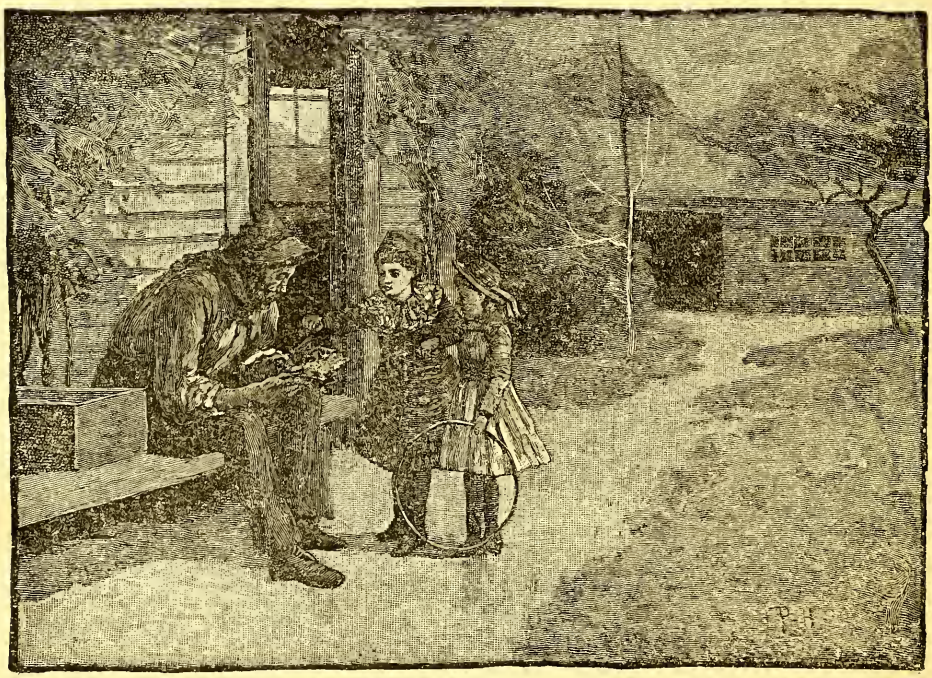
One time, while a very fierce fight was raging, the driver called out to him "Stand, my brave beast, stand!" A moment later the mahout received a fatal wound, and fell to the ground, where he lay beneath a pile of wounded and slain.

The obedient animal would not move, though the battle raged wildly around him. The Poona soldiers, who feared they were being overcome, were cheered on by the sight of the flag still floating from his back.

He never stirred a foot, and all through the hot fight, the noise, the smoke, the confusion, listened patiently for the voice of his master.

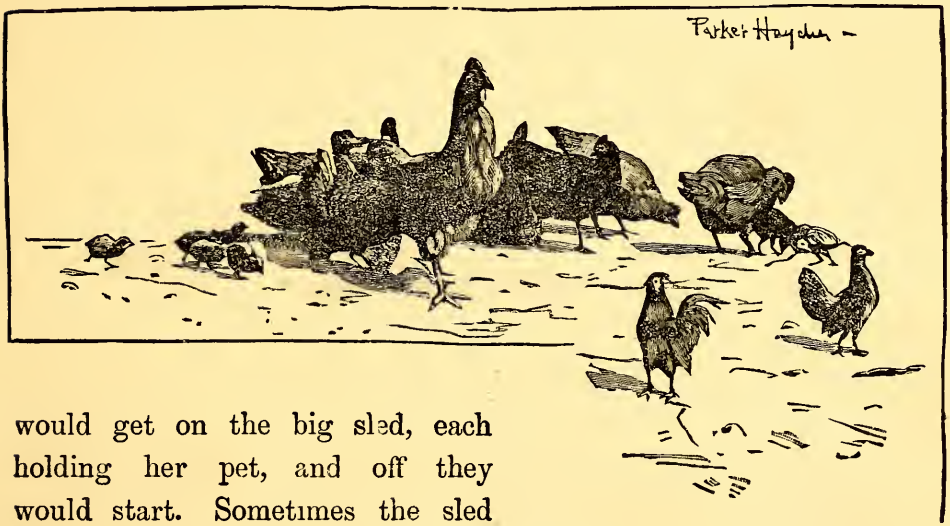
A CHICKEN WITH A WOODEN LEG.

Stella and Laura had some little white bantams, which were very tame, and of which they were very fond. There were two of them, — a rooster and a hen. Neither was larger than good-sized pigeons.



The rooster put on far more airs, and held his head higher, than the great Cochin-China in the barn-yard, and he always managed to be ahead of the latter in getting off the first crow in the morning. In the winter the children were fond of coasting, and they seldom thought of starting out without "Tip" and "Ty," as they had curiously named their feathered friends.

These chickens really seemed to like to ride. The little girls



would get on the big sled, each holding her pet, and off they would start. Sometimes the sled would be sent down, carrying the chickens alone. "Tip" would generally keep his balance, but his mate always became frightened and jumped off when about half-way down.

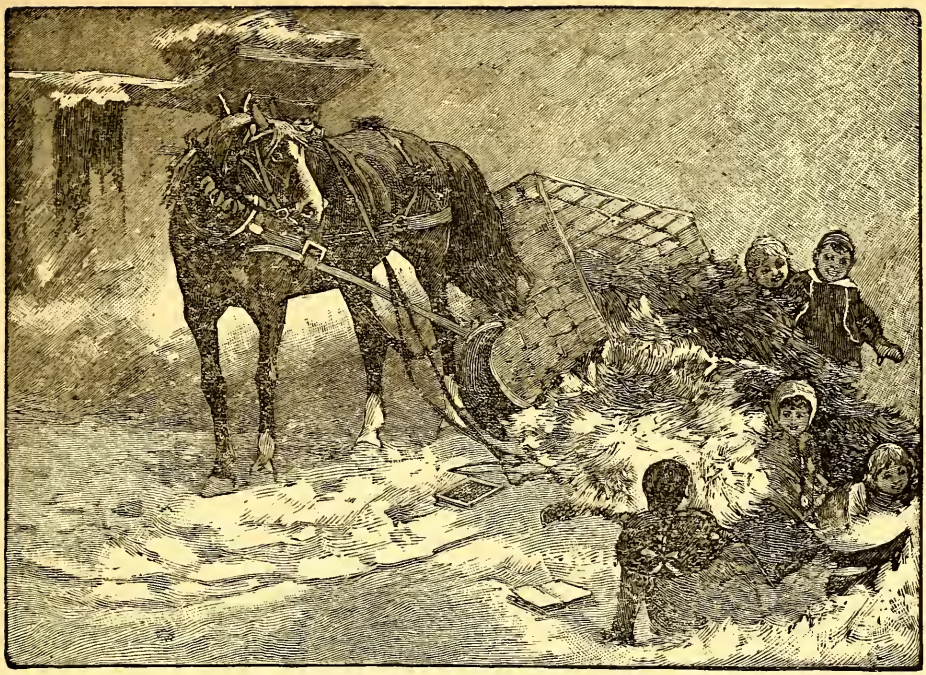
The children kept these chickens for over three years. One night a weasel got into the hen-house and killed them.

Some time after this, Stella found a little chicken with its leg badly broken. She carried it to Adam, the gardener. The leg was so badly crushed that it could never be of any use, and Adam cut it off. Then he carefully bound up the stump. After a while it healed, and he made as well as he could a wooden leg,

which he bound on to the stump. The chicken thrived, and seemed to take kindly to its wooden leg.

Sometimes it forgot, and tried to scratch with it, but it would not work.

It had a peculiar walk,—a sort of a hop, from which the children christened it "Hoppy." At night they put it up in a box made on purpose for it, fastened up inside of the hen-house. Hoppy lived to a good old age, but never did anything remarkable.



OLD SILVER HEELS.

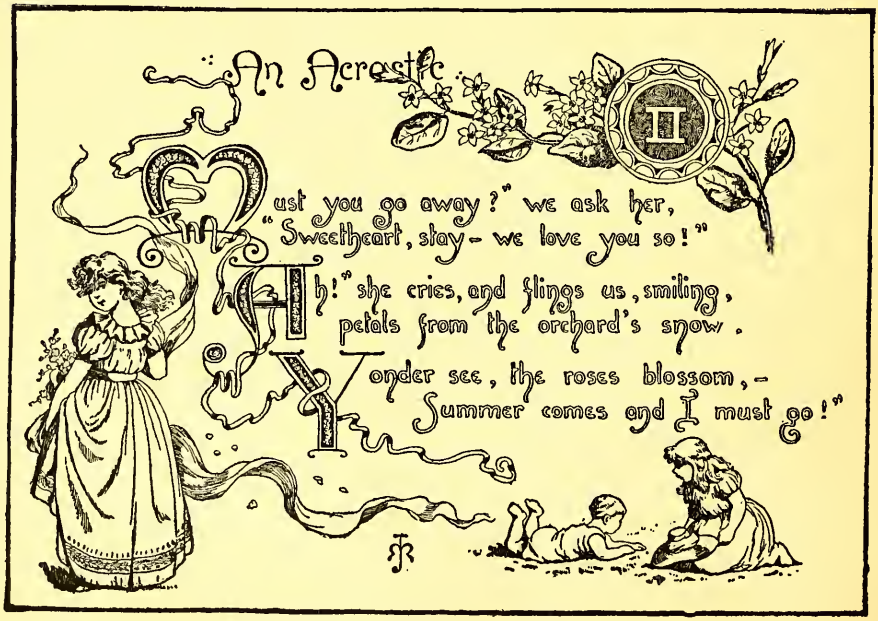
This is the true story which Aunt Lucy often tells the children, as we sit around the fire at twilight.

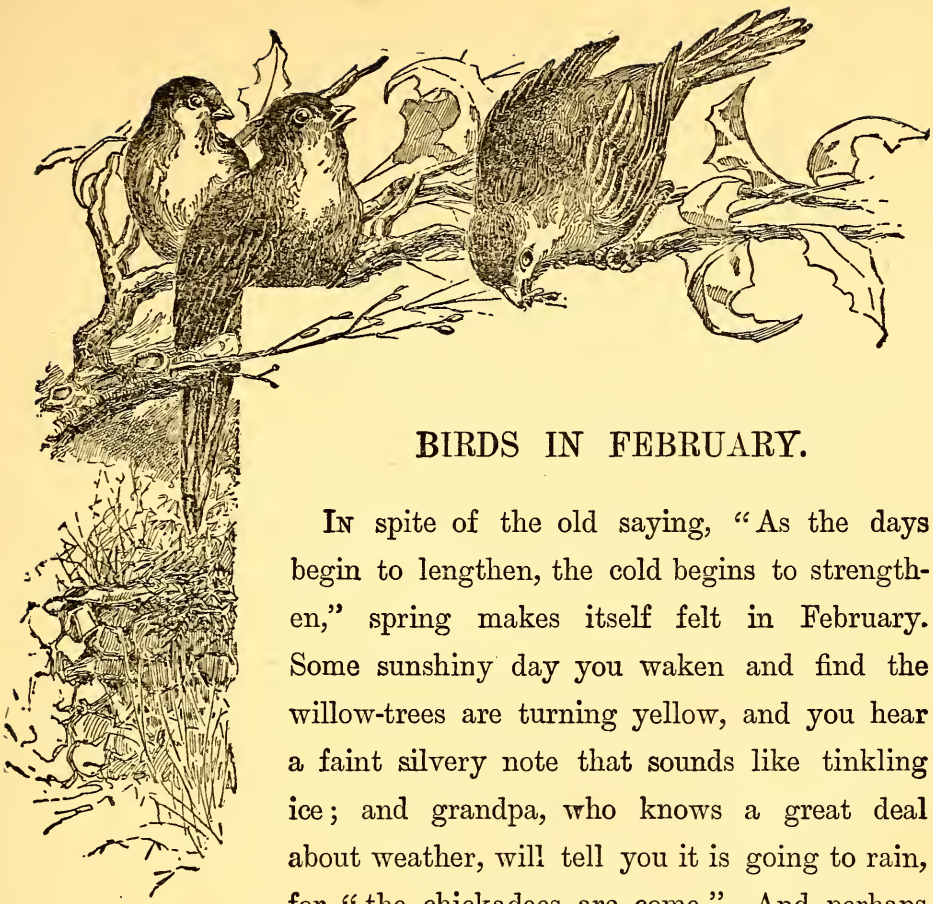
"When I was a little girl — seventy years ago — we had to go more than a mile to school. One of the large boys would come for us at night, with old Silver Heels and a sleigh made of a crockery crate on runners.

"We would pile in until there was not room enough for another one, shouting, laughing, and snow-balling each other. Old Silver Heels would go on patiently across the bridge, and about half-way up the long hill. Then he would turn round, and take a good look at the load. If there were more than three or four of us he would begin to back down the hill.

"Back — back down the hill to the very bottom. Then, without a word, he would walk up again to the same place. If we had not lightened the load he would look around and go backing down again. Sometimes we let him do so five or six times before the boys would get out; but we never could get home until they did so.

"After they were out, and old Silver Heels had counted the load, he would go gravely on to a steep, 'sidling' place, near the gate, where he generally managed to tip us all over. We didn't care for that, for it was only fun to shake off the snow and run into the house."


An Acrostic
"ust you go away?" we ask her,
"Sweetheart, stay - we love you so!"
h!" she cries, and flings us, smiling,
petals from the orchard's snow.
onder see, the roses blossom, -
Summer comes and I must go!"



BIRDS IN FEBRUARY.

In spite of the old saying, "As the days begin to lengthen, the cold begins to strengthen," spring makes itself felt in February. Some sunshiny day you waken and find the willow-trees are turning yellow, and you hear a faint silvery note that sounds like tinkling ice; and grandpa, who knows a great deal about weather, will tell you it is going to rain, for "the chickadees are come." And perhaps Dennis or Patrick, or whatever the gardener's name is, will grumble that the birds will spoil the fruit buds. But do not believe him. Those tiny birds with dark wings and gray vests never touch a bud that hasn't a grub in it, and are our busy, kind little friends. Sometimes the chickadee is called the black-capped titmouse, and scholars give him a long Latin name, but I like best to call him from the song he sings, when he is happy, in spite of chilly winds and snow, "chick-a-dee-dee-dee; chick-a-dee!"

The Chimney Swallow.

MARIAN was a little city girl who went one summer to visit her grandfather in the country. He lived in a low, old farmhouse among the Berkshire hills. She was delighted with everything she saw, and wished that she could stay there always.

There was an old attic filled with curious things whose use she did not even know. She liked to play "house" with them, and often pretended that she was her own great-grandmother as she ranged them around in circles and squares to correspond to the rooms of a house.

One day after she had grown tired of playing in the attic she thought that she would explore an old, unused "ell," which she had once peeped into. It did not prove very interesting, and she was just turning to go, when plump, something fell down the great, wide-throated chimney. Two chimney swallows, with a whirr and a flutter, followed, flying about the room as if in sore distress. They finally hovered over the little, dark object which lay in the fireplace.

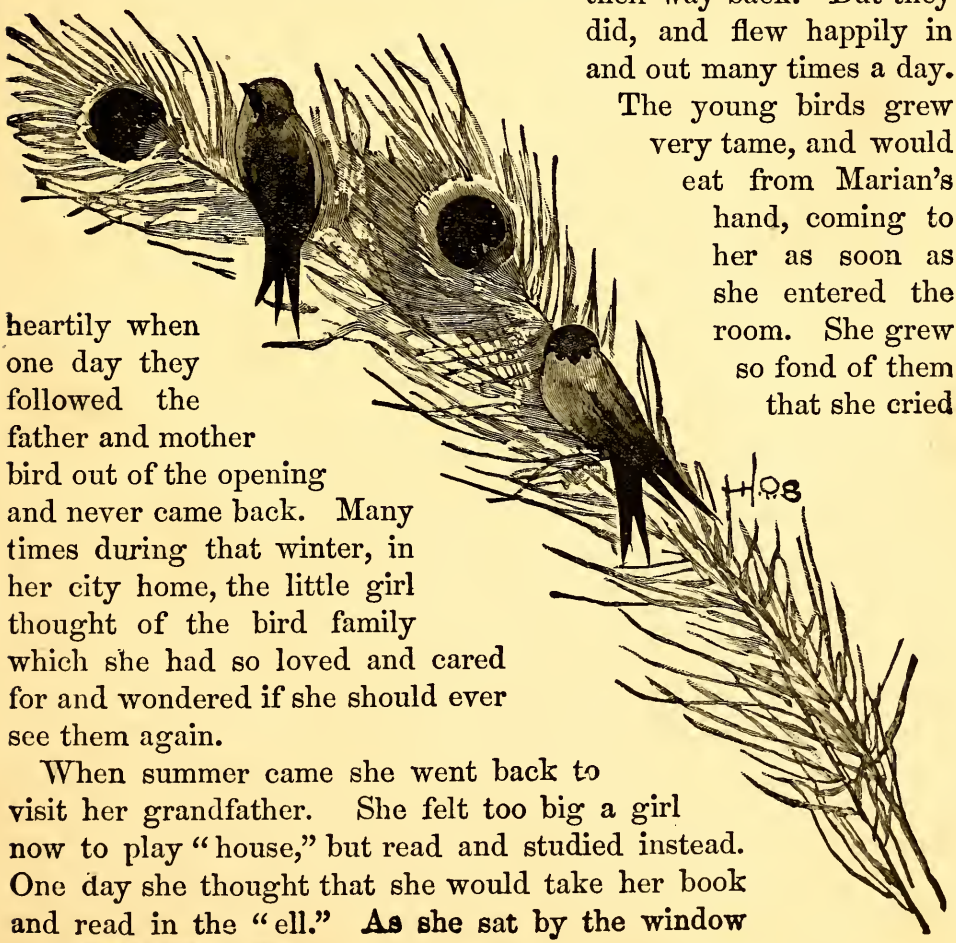
What do you think it was? A nest, in which were three little birds! It was the swallows' home, which, by some means, had

become loosed from the chimney where it had been fixed. Strangely enough, not one of the little birds was injured.

Marian placed the nest carefully on the window-sill, and then ran out to the kitchen to get some crumbs of bread to feed the open mouths.

As the days went on the swallow family formed the little girl's chief delight and care. She told her grandfather about the nest and begged him to take out a pane of glass from the window so that the big birds might be free to come and go as they pleased.

When they first flew away she felt afraid that they would not find their way back. But they did, and flew happily in and out many times a day. The young birds grew very tame, and would eat from Marian's hand, coming to her as soon as she entered the room. She grew so fond of them that she cried heartily when one day they followed the father and mother bird out of the opening and never came back. Many times during that winter, in her city home, the little girl thought of the bird family which she had so loved and cared for and wondered if she should ever see them again.



When summer came she went back to visit her grandfather. She felt too big a girl now to play "house," but read and studied instead. One day she thought that she would take her book and read in the "ell." As she sat by the window

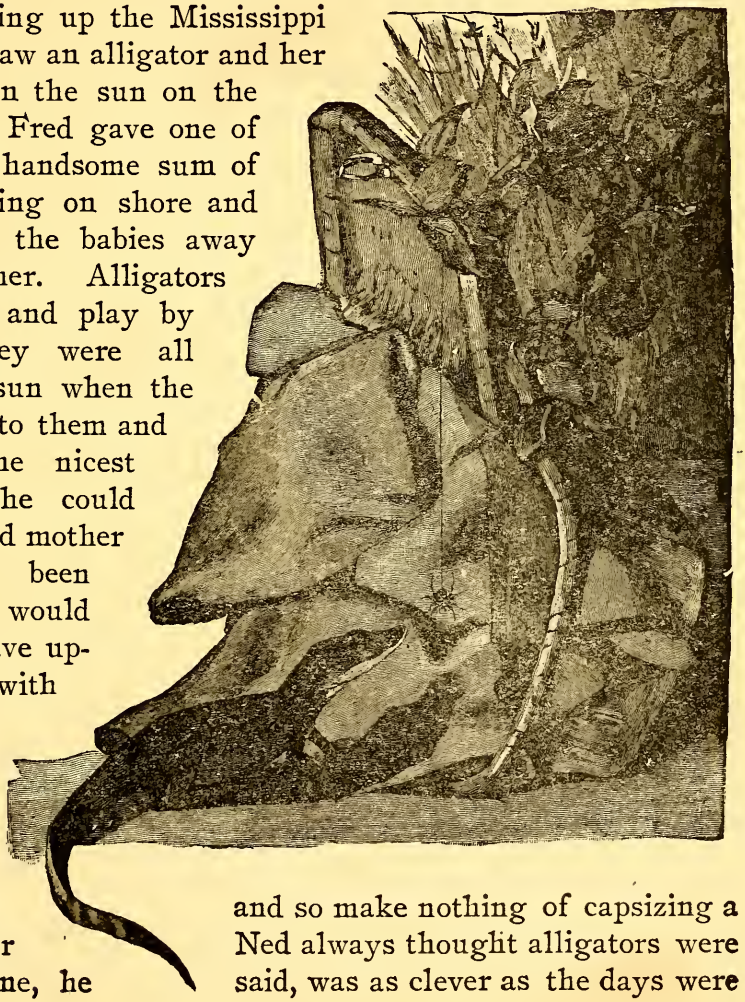
thinking of the happy hours she had spent in the little room, she happened to look up and saw a nest fastened to the side of the fire-place. Her heart beat fast. She arose and tip-toed over to it. Could it be that one of her swallows had built it? The nest was full of little opening mouths.

Just as she was about to run for some crumbs a swallow darted in through the window. It did not seem at all afraid of Marian, so she felt sure that it was one of the swallows which she had helped rear the summer before.

"O Grandpa," she said, running into the sitting-room, where the old gentleman sat, "one of my family is back—and he knows me—and I am so happy!"

FELIX, THE ALLIGATOR.

When I was a little girl Cousin Fred went down South. He said he would bring me home a pet, and so he did. It was a baby alligator.



He was sailing up the Mississippi River and he saw an alligator and her young lying in the sun on the bank. Cousin Fred gave one of the boatmen a handsome sum of money for going on shore and taking one of the babies away from its mother. Alligators sleep by day and play by night, so they were all asleep in the sun when the man crept up to them and picked out the nicest looking one he could find. If the old mother alligator had been awake she would very likely have upset their boat with a blow of her tail, for alligators have great strength in their tails, and so make nothing of capsizing a canoe. Brother Ned always thought alligators were ugly, but mine, he said, was as clever as the days were long.

I named him Felix. Ned said he thought "Prolix" would be a better name. But nursie told me not to mind his droll sayings. Felix learned to eat meat out of my hand, and he would follow

me about as well as a dog. He used to crawl about the veranda, hunting for insects. He liked any kind of an insect, no matter how small.

When the cold weather comes, alligators bury themselves in the mud. They stay there until it gets warmer. But I did not think Felix would want to do so, for he was civilized.

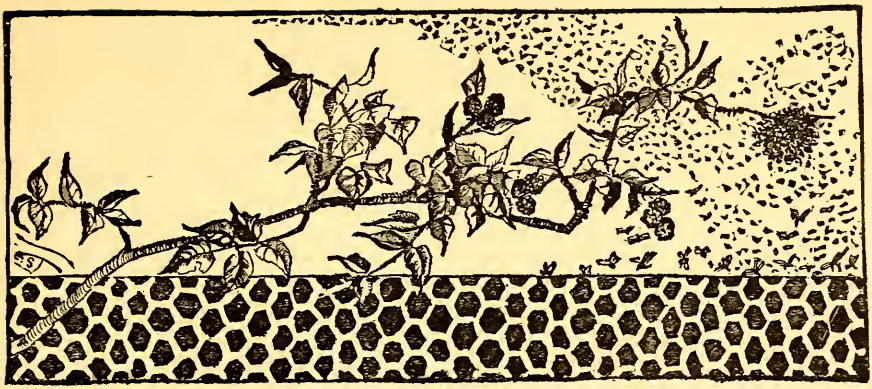
"It isn't so easy to forget what is natural," nurse said. "Your Cousin Fred told me that down South, where Felix came from, alligators are almost lifeless after they go to sleep in the mud. The sunshine brings them to." Nursie was particular to add, "but whether or no our Northern sunshine will revive Felix, I can't say."

Mother fixed the nicest basket you ever saw. And, sure enough, it was just as Cousin Fred said; the minute the cold weather began, Felix crawled into it, but he never came out alive.

"Wool isn't mud," nursie told us. "You can't make alligators into children," which is true. But it makes us gentle and loving to be kind to dumb animals; and of course dumb mothers are very different from our kind of mothers.

The alligator mother lays her eggs in the mud, and leaves them to be hatched by the sun. But she never goes far away from them, and when the little alligators come out of their shells, their mother is very fond of her babies.

The pretty pocket books andbags that you see in store windows are prepared from alligator skins. My Felix had just such a skin.



TED AND HIS CALF.

YOUNG Ted was a rider bold,
Who never did things by half,
And so he hitched to his cart one day
A strong and frolicsome calf.

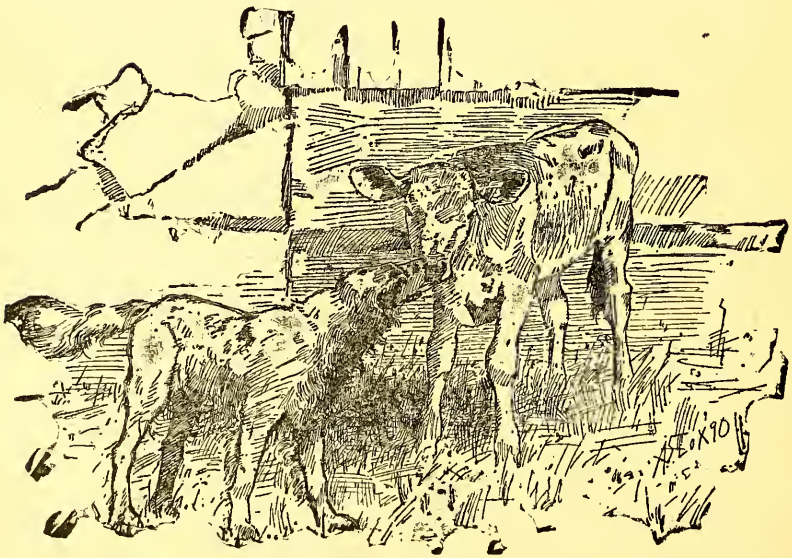
Away he went, and on behind
Came a troop of merry boys,

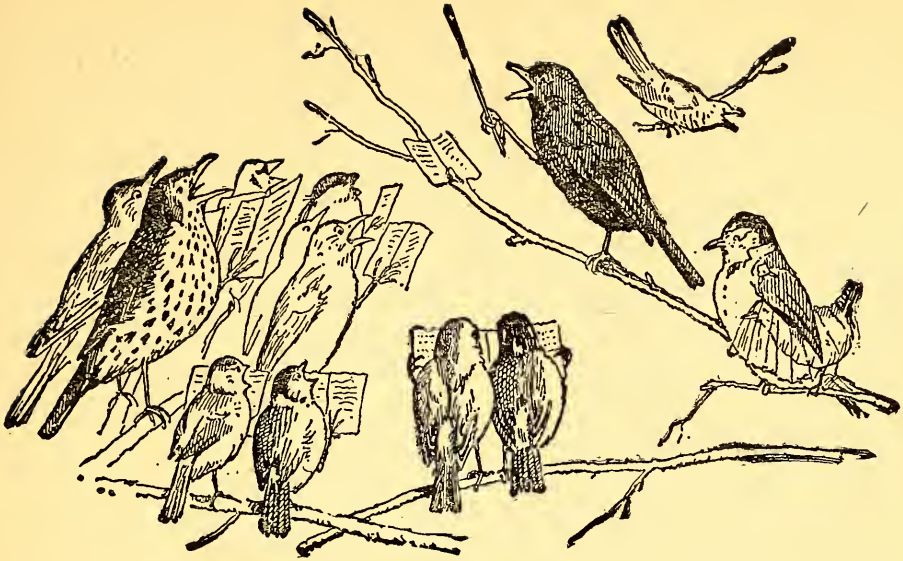
Who tossed their caps, and screamed aloud,
Till the woods rang with the noise.

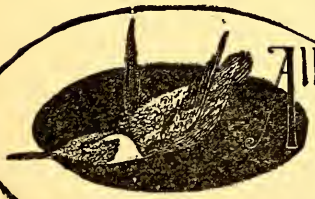
But the steed was like his driver,—
He wouldn't do things by half,—
And never had Ted a drive like that
He had with his frolicsome calf.

Then Ted tried another game,
And mounted his sturdy steed;
But the calf resolved he wouldn't bear that,
So he ran with all his speed.

Ted learned to his great dismay,
That it wouldn't do by half,
When he wanted fun, to tamper with
A strong and frolicsome calf.







All about a little Humming-bird, Tiddlety-winks.

He was picked up in the middle of the road, a wee birdling which had fluttered from its nest.

His plaintive little cries were heard by grandpa Lord on his way to spend the day with his grandchildren.

After vainly trying to find the tiny home, grandpa concluded to take the little feathered wanderer with him.

When grandpa appeared with this unexpected visitor the question was — what could they do with him, for what could he eat?

Birdie was first placed in a little basket lined with the softest batting. Sugar and water were mixed, and with a tiny straw for a spoon, birdie lapped the sweet, and when he had had enough cuddled down in his cottony bed and went to sleep.

Carrie said, "I know what we will call him—'Tiddlety-winks;'" and so he was named.

ALL ALONE.

I've two little hands to hold the rope,
I've two little feet to jump and trip,
And I try very hard; so soon I hope
To learn all alone the way to skip!

TINO.

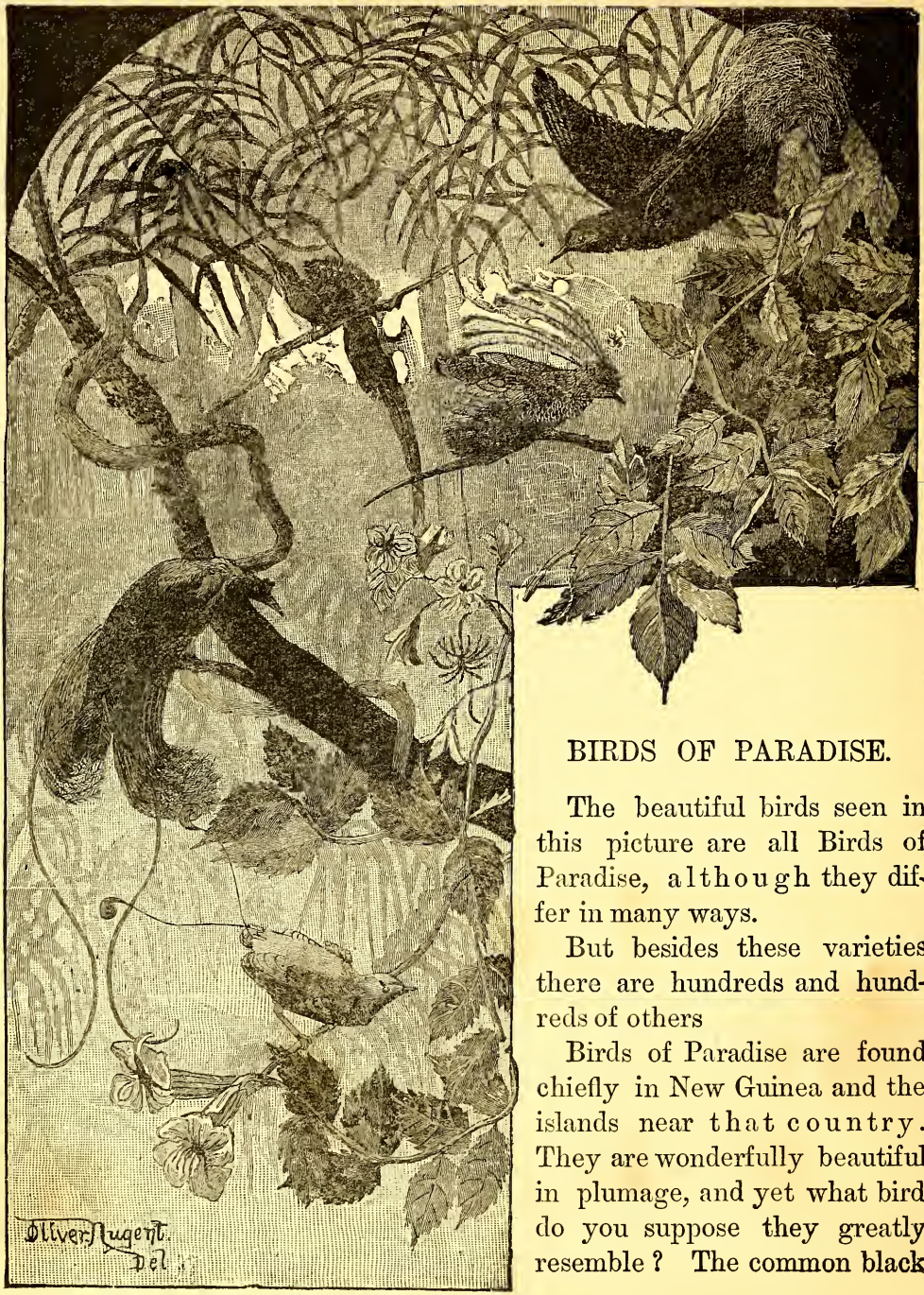
The children in the Warburton School have such a queer pet.

I wonder if you can guess what it is. No, not a rabbit or a kitten, nor even a mouse, but a funny little chameleon that was sent all the way from Florida to Miss Durand, the principal of the school.

He is a very little creature, and only measures seven inches from his queer little nose to the tip of his tiny tail. They call him Tino. Tino will fasten his little hand-like feet into Miss Durand's apron, and ride triumphantly around the schoolroom, to

the great delight of the children. The first time he visited them they admired his beautiful green coat, but very much to their astonishment the next time he came his color had changed to brown. They soon discovered that he had a variety of coats; indeed, he seems to have rare taste in dress, and is always able to make himself harmonize with his surroundings.

Tino's principal diet is live flies. The boys bring him a supply of these every morning, and never tire of watching him dart out his long, forked tongue and catch his victims. His favorite resting-place is a large plant that stands near the door of the dressing-room.



BIRDS OF PARADISE.

The beautiful birds seen in this picture are all Birds of Paradise, although they differ in many ways.

But besides these varieties there are hundreds and hundreds of others

Birds of Paradise are found chiefly in New Guinea and the islands near that country. They are wonderfully beautiful in plumage, and yet what bird do you suppose they greatly resemble? The common black

crow. We should not see this resemblance unless we studied birds and compared one kind with another. The Bird of Paradise is like the crow in the shape of its body, its bill and feet. Then its habits, and strange to say its cries are like those of the crow.

The skins of the Birds of Paradise used sometimes to be worn by eastern soldiers when they went into battle. The soldiers thought the skins served as a charm to protect the wearer from harm.

When the skins of these birds with the feathers on were sent to foreign countries all signs of legs or feet were removed. From this fact the idea arose that the creatures had no feet. It was thought they floated in the air always, or hung from the trees by the long fine feathers of their tails. This foolish idea was believed for many, many years by intelligent people.

In its natural home the Bird of Paradise is very active and lively in its habits. If caught and kept in a cage it is pert and bold.

In different languages different names are given these gorgeous, beautiful creatures. In one language they are called Birds of Paradise, in another Birds of the Air, in a third Birds of the Sun, and most beautiful of all — God's Birds.

MUD–TURTLE.

MUD–TURTLE looked from out his shell;—
The jewel-weeds beside the brook
Their gold and rubies o'er him shook;
The mint gave out its cool, fresh smell;
The swimming minnows glistened bright,
Where, in the water, shone the light;
And, on the green moss by the brink,
A little bird came down to drink;
The frogs among the rushes leapt;
A moth beneath a dock-leaf slept.

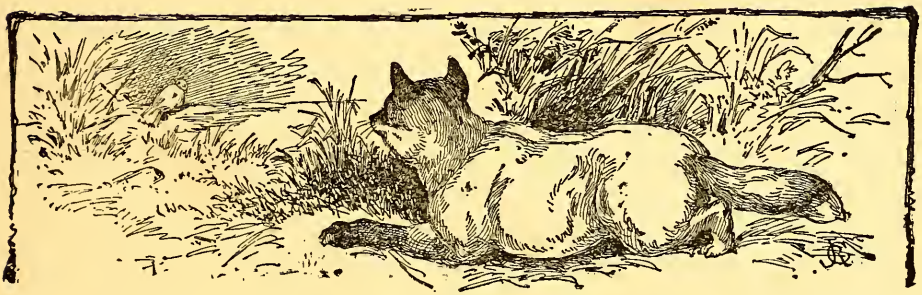
The frogs among the rushes leapt;
A moth beneath a dock-leaf slept.

With greedy eyes and waiting jaw
Mud-Turtle stretched his neck far out;
He snapped at everything he saw:
The frogs in terror sprang about;
The minnows knew not what to do;
Away the bird, loud twittering, flew;
The sleeping moth awoke too late,
To find that he had met his fate!
Mud-Turtle drew within his shell.
"This world is very wrong," said he;
"The reason why I cannot tell,
That no one seems more fond of me!"

A Bad Beginning

Old mother Fox one evening looked
From out her den of rocks;
"Come here, my pretty Bushy Tail,"
She called her little Fox.
"You're getting larger every day,
You're growing strong; I feel
'Tis time that you should leave your play,

And should begin to steal.
The farmer's eye is quick and keen,
The Chicken-roosts are high;
The Rabbit, he is fleet of foot;
The Partridge, she is sly.
If you would live upon your wits,
You must be very sly;
You'll have to watch before you pounce;
You must be very sly."



"Yes, mother," said young Bushy Tail,
"I know just how you feel,
But I've begun to prowl about;
I've really learned to steal.
The Rabbit runs, the Partridge flies,
The Chicken-roosts are high,
But I shall wait a chance to pounce;
I shall be very sly.
I mean to live upon my wits;
I shall be very sly."

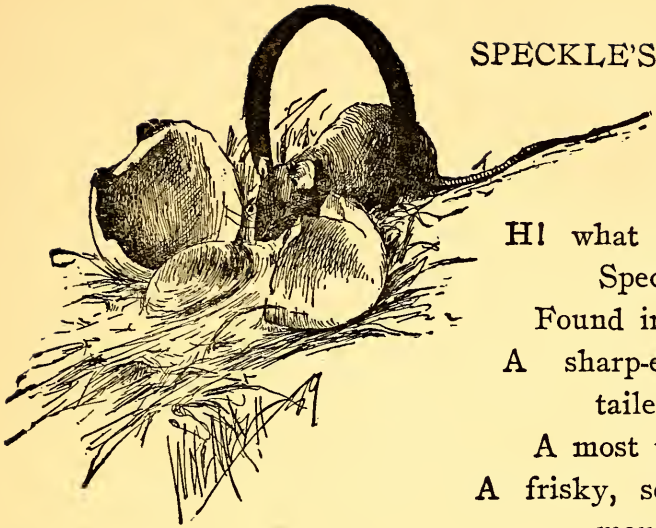
So off they both together went,
And left their den of rocks;
And which one of the two was worse,
The big or little Fox?

THE HOOPOE.

In all your travels I dare say you never saw this singular-looking bird, the hoopoe, and you will be obliged to go a long distance to find one, as far as Africa or the Indian archipelago. If you find these names on your map, you will not forget the home of the hoopoe.

What makes this bird so different from all others is his beautiful crest of tall feathers. These feathers stand out on top of his head like an open fan, and he carries his crest in a very stately way, so he must feel quite proud of it. Now you have often heard that fine feathers make fine birds, and this is the case with this bird. He is handsome because his feathers, and especially the feathers on his head, are so fine, although his bill and his legs are of a bright coral-red color. You see, he can be proud of his feet, as well as his head. His bill is quite long, and he can dig in the ground for worms as well as you could dig with a spade, and perhaps a great deal better. He has a way of puffing his neck until it becomes quite large, and then he utters a sound—hoo—hoo—hoo—very rapidly. The only change he ever makes in his note is hoh—hoh—hoh and this he says when he is angry or disturbed. But when he is in a good humor he will say his hoo—hoo—hoo very softly and smoothly.

When you visit a place where there is a large collection of birds, ask to see the hoopoe.



SPECKLE'S NEST.

Hi what do you think old
Speckle one day
Found in her cosy nest?
A sharp-eyed, furry, long-
tailed thing,
A most unwelcome guest—
A frisky, squeaking, impudent
mouse,
Who quite disdained to beg,
Yet slipped in her nest when she was away
And broke her new-laid egg.

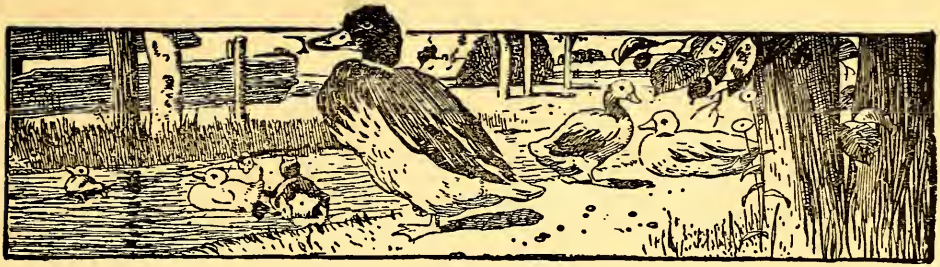
"What are you about, you wicked mouse?"
Old Speckle cried with scorn.
"I'll teach you not to come in my house,
As sure as you are born!"
With that she gave him such a peck,
And held him down so tight,
The poor little mousie shrieked with pain,
And nearly died of fright."

THE PITCHER PLANT.

Among all the curious leaves that grow, the Chinese "pitcher plant" is the most singular. It is just in the shape of a pitcher, and has a little lid to it, too. This is usually closed tight, so that, of course, the rain can never get in, and yet it is always filled with water. If you were to measure it you would find about a tumbler-ful in it.

How do you think the water gets there? Well, it is a part of the sap, of which we have talked before, that comes to the leaf through the thousands and thousands of little mouths on the inside of the pitcher, and so it is kept filled. If the leaf was spread out all this moisture would go off into the air. God knew that, where it was to grow, men often had a hard time to get water to drink, and so he provided these little cupfuls of it by the wayside, to quench their thirst.

In the island of Ceylon it is called the "monkey cup," because these mischievous creatures know just how to open the lid, and drink the water.



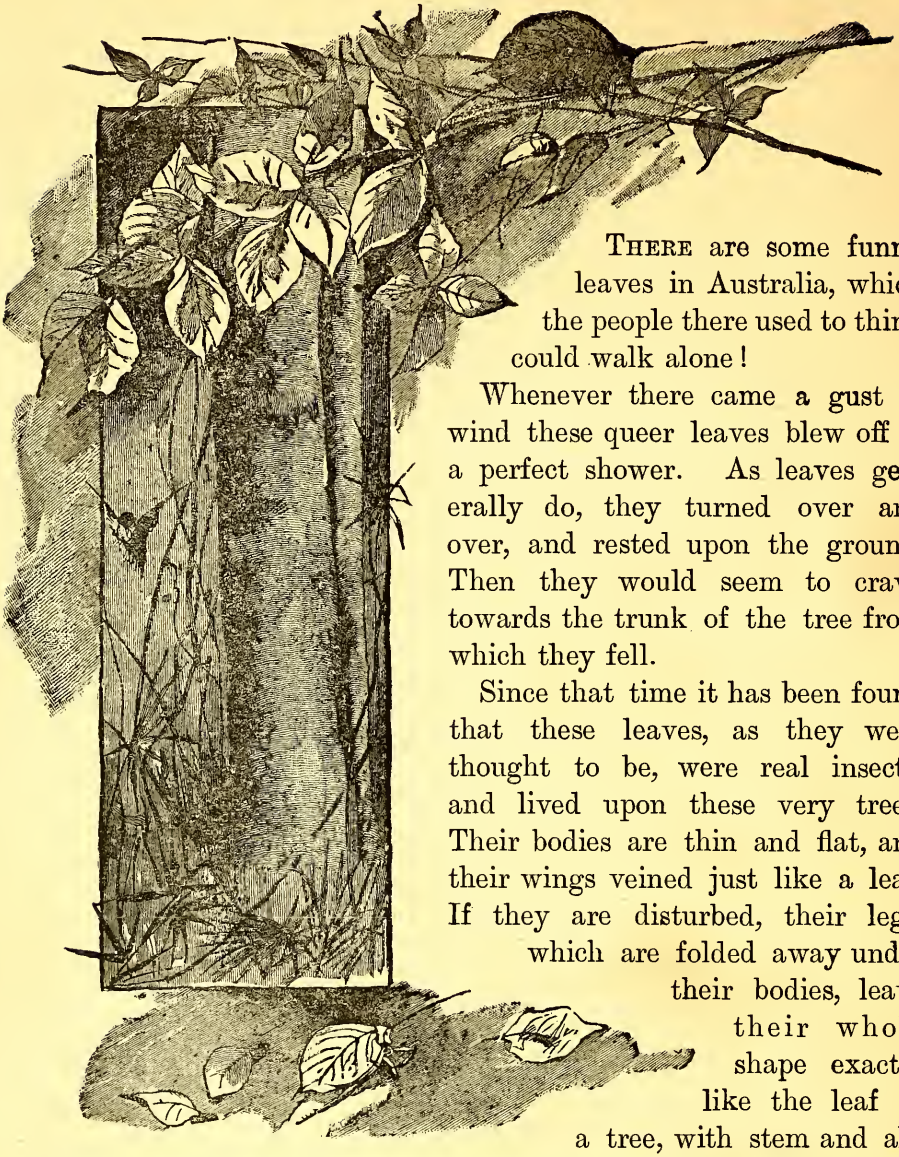
MARY AND THE DUCKS

MARY went one winter's day
Down beside the pond to play,
Where the ducks were paddling round
On the cold and snowy ground.
"Quack," they cried, and meant to say:
"Mary dear, good day, good day!"

One began to flap its wings;
(They were hungry, poor wee things!)
Mary ran to brother Jim,
Cuddling up in fear to him;
But the duck had only said:
"Mary dear, I want some bread!"

Jim and Mary, kind and good,
Ran and fetched the ducks some food;
And, when they had fed them all,
"Quack," the birds did loudly call;
"Thanks so much!" they meant to cry,
"Mary dear, good-bye, good-bye!"

THE WALKING LEAVES OF AUSTRALIA.

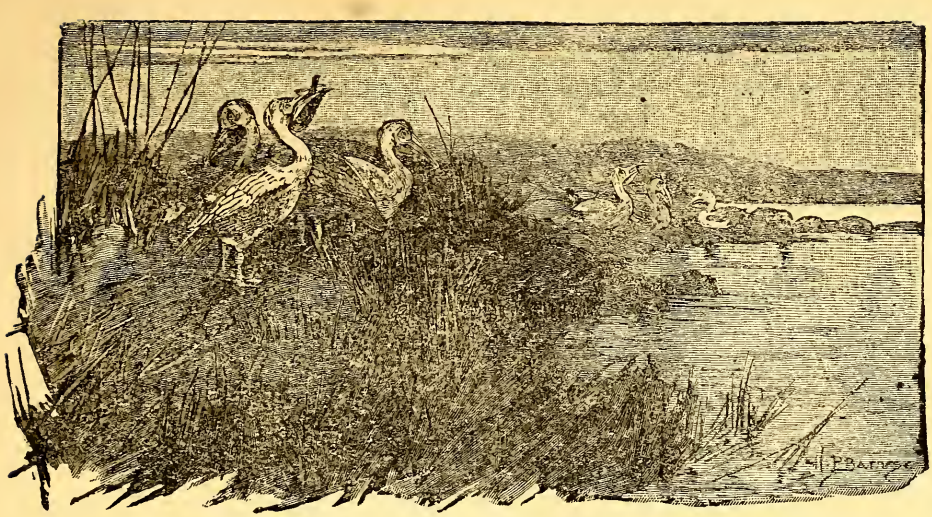


THERE are some funny leaves in Australia, which the people there used to think could walk alone!

Whenever there came a gust of wind these queer leaves blew off in a perfect shower. As leaves generally do, they turned over and over, and rested upon the ground. Then they would seem to crawl towards the trunk of the tree from which they fell.

Since that time it has been found that these leaves, as they were thought to be, were real insects, and lived upon these very trees. Their bodies are thin and flat, and their wings veined just like a leaf. If they are disturbed, their legs, which are folded away under their bodies, leave their whole shape exactly like the leaf of a tree, with stem and all.

Bright green in the summer, these singular little insects slowly change their color to a dingy brown, just like a frost-bitten leaf. Strange, that with wings they do not fly, but rather walk or crawl along the ground!



THE PELICANS.

The pelican family have very long bills for their upper jaw, and a soft bag or pouch for the lower. In this they gather a whole dinner of fish for their children.

These birds always dress in half-mourning. The father and mother are in white with black trimmings, while the children wear Quaker gray.

The pelicans choose their nests among the rocks, in some dry place, and nestle down in them very comfortably. They are so lazy that they will go to sleep anywhere on the ground, with their feet curled under them. Nothing but an earthquake would wake them up.

This is why they like desert places to live in. There they can eat and sleep, and no one will trouble them. It is really all they do. You know the Bible tells us of "the lonely pelican of the wilderness," and David said he was like one.

HOW MASON WASPS WORK.

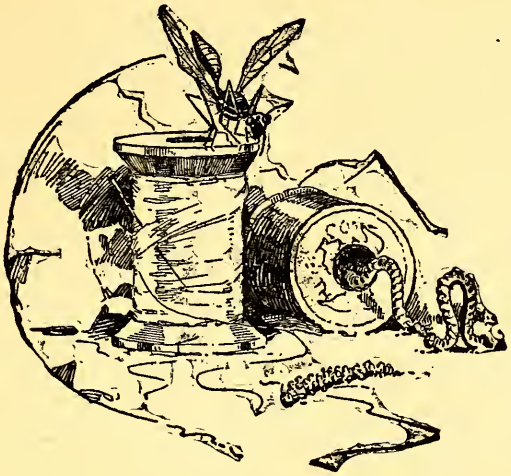
Mrs. Woods sat at the window in one of the rooms of her country house busily sewing. Several spools lay on the sill.

"Oh," said Marjorie, who stood by her side, and took off a needleful now and then for her mother, "here's a horrid, green caterpillar inside the spool!" and sure enough there was.

Taking the spool out of her hand her mother shook the caterpillar out and went on with her work. Again she needed some cotton, and

again Marjorie broke the thread. Another caterpillar was again in the same place. What did it mean?

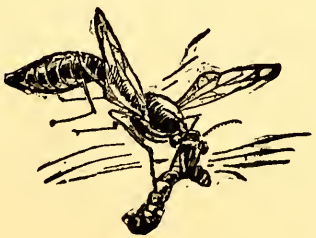
Again Mrs. Woods shook the spool out of the window, and this



time examined it more closely, when to her surprise she found two more exactly like the others in size.

Just then came a mason wasp bringing in his jaws a fine, green caterpillar, which he left where the others had been placed. Now it was explained how they came to be there; but the wasp must have had some reason for doing it, and so it had, as you will see.

Very soon his partner followed, and laid a tiny egg on each of the caterpillars and went her way; she brought in mud many times, until eggs and caterpillars were quite sealed up.



FLOWERS THAT LOVE THE SUN.

THERE are some flowers that love the sunlight as much as you do. See the sunflower, with its great, honest face, always looking towards the west until it has gone out of sight The next morning you will find that same flower gazing towards the east, all ready and waiting for it to rise. This is why this flower has often been called the "Sun Worshipper."

The little white daisy is a great lover of the open light of day. This is why it used to be called "day's eye." And the marigold mourns its going so much that it solemnly closes just at night-fall.

So does the oxalis, and you will not only find its flowers closed, but the leaves, too, folded all up into three pretty divisions, like a heart. And our sweet pond-lily always hides away under the water when the sun is gone, only to appear when it comes up in the morning.

VENUS'S FLY-TRAP.

OOK at this harmless looking flower with its cluster of white blossoms. Would you think for one moment that it was a robber and murderer, and that it actually makes war upon the poor little insects that happen to fly too near to the dangerous plant? Yet it does have this very bad reputation, and the worst thing is that what is said about it is all true.

It is a very curious plant, indeed, one of the most wonderful in the whole world. It grows wild in the wet, sandy bogs and marshes of North Carolina and South Carolina, and very many persons cultivate it in green-houses and bestow much care upon it in order to learn all its ways and tricks. Botanists, who have made a study of this wonderful plant, have discovered facts which will astonish a little boy and girl quite as much as they astonish grown people. Look at the leaves around its stem. Each one of these leaves has sharp teeth like a saw, and they can spring very much like a steel-trap.

A CROCUS STORY.

"ARE you awake?" whispered a little blue crocus to a white one, who had been sleeping by her side under the earth for months.

"Yes, wide awake, and warm all through. I am sure it must be Spring," the little white one answered.

"Oh, yes, this is Spring," whispered blue. "Our shoots have been out a week, and all that time the sun has felt warm. Suppose we bloom; the earth will be so glad to see a flower again."

"I'm willing," responded little white crocus. "I want nothing so much as to help make the world beautiful and tell people the Spring has come, so let us send round a crocus murmur to all the flower-beds, parks and gardens in the big city; then they will know it is time to wake up and bloom."

"Don't venture out yet," a tulip bulb grumbled from her earth-bed a few inches below the little crocus. "March is only half gone, and you know old Winter will never let him alone. There will be awful cold winds before April comes. You had better stay where you are and keep warm."

"Dear! oh, dear!" sighed blue and white, "we dread the freezing winds. "Perhaps, Miss Tulip, you are wrong. I am sure we ought to be out."

"Let us venture," urged a tiny pink crocus near by. "We can at least show Mr. Winter that Spring has come, and that he must go away. Come, let us do our best and not be afraid of a little cold."

So a crocus murmur went round to all the flower-beds, parks and gardens in the big city, telling the little crocus flowers to wake up and bloom. The next morning everything was beautified by thousands of spring messengers holding up their tiny bell-cups to the

sun—some white, some yellow, some blue, and a few pink. The earth was glad to hold on her breast again such beauty. Even the people passing stopped, smiled and said with confidence, "*Now*, spring has *really* come."

Alas! there was one who gave the flowers no welcome. It was Mr. Winter. "I feel indignant," he complained to March, "that such tiny little flowers dare come up and make me feel uncomfortable and out of place. Now, I suppose I must take my departure, but before I leave, dear March, you must let me give them a fright and a chill."

"Oh, Mr. Winter!" begged March, shivering and bewildered, "please leave me and go away. I can't control my winds when you

keep interfering, you mix me all up. Here you come with snow and cold trying to kill the pretty green things that I have had such trouble to wake out of the frozen ground."

Then Mr. Winter sent a gray snow-cloud to cover the sun, and breathed an icy air into the March wind. He laughed when a few feathery flakes settled on his nose. "Only a day more; give me just one day more, friend March," he begged. "I will then go and shut myself up in my big cave for a long snooze."

March nodded his consent, and together they started like a wild express train. The whole thing was a frolic, after all. As the snow covered the flowers it whispered, "Do not fear, I will keep you folded warm until this cold wind blows Mr. Winter away."

The wind was not only merry but busy also. It blew light green into all the willows, red into the maples, a faint white into the plum and apple buds; it tore the dead leaves away from the sweet arbutus, it played a regular game with ladies' skirts and veils, it took off men's hats, and the noses and cheeks that came in its way were painted a deep red. By night all was over and Mr. Winter had departed. A soft breath of April filled the air. As it swept gently over the snow it said, "Melt at once; you are sadly out of place covering spring flowers."

With the morning came a perfect flood of sunshine and warmth, so the birds began to sing.

"Oh, how glad I am," laughed the little blue crocus, "that we came out just when we did."

"I'm glad." "And so am I glad." "And so are we glad." All the others answered.

THE BLACK SHEEP

"BAA, Baa, Black Sheep, are your bags full?"
"Yes, little Master, of the finest wool;
Black soft fleeces to spin you garments warm
That the wind may not hurt you though it rage into a storm.
Fine soft fleeces to stuff a baby's bed
And as black as the beaver upon your curly head."

Lisped Dolly Dimples, "Do your bags hold enough
To make me a tippet, and to line my doll a muff?"

DO YOU REALLY?

DO you think a crab could climb a tree;
Do you really?
Do you think a mouse could catch a flea;
Do you really?
Do you think that apple-trees can speak;
Or that Sunday comes three times a week;
Do you think a donkey has a beak;
Do you really?

Do you think that guinea-pigs have tails;
Do you really?
Or that rabbits live on tenpenny nails;
Do you really?
Do you think a cat nine lives has got;
That a strawberry ice is nicest hot;
Do you think a lobster loves the pot;
Do you really?

"Oh, come with me," said the big doggie,
As he winked with his eye that was dotted;
He had, they say, a fascinating way
Of seeming to be kind when he plotted.

The little dog good said he wished he could,
But mamma "No, no" had told him.
He was very much afraid, if away he strayed,
That mamma would surely scold him.

"If only you yield and come out in the field,"
Said the big dog, whispering low,
"There's a wee little mouse for you to touse,
And a bird to chase, I'll show."

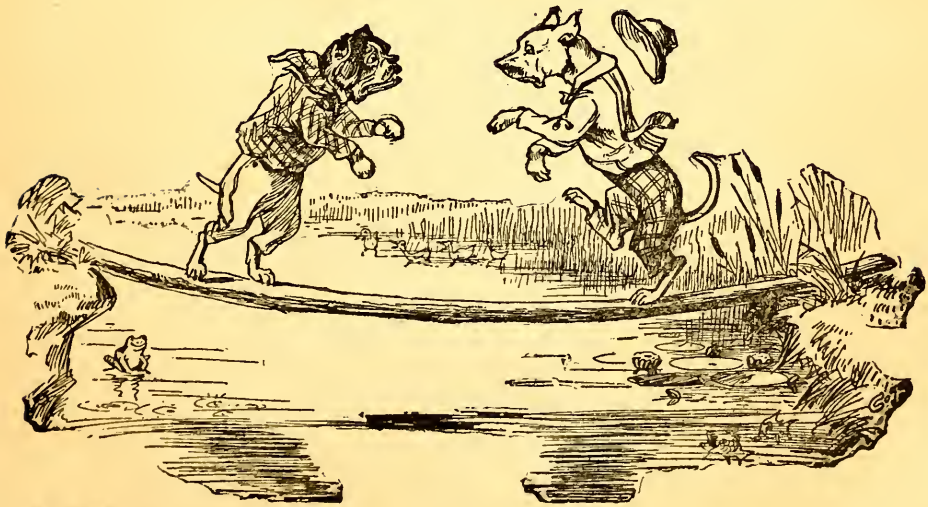
With a yearning sigh, and a soft "Oh, my!"
The little dog pricked up his ears.
There was fun alive, could he contrive
To elude his mother's fears.

The tempter wily his chops licked slyly,
And added, in accents thick:
"Down by the stone there's a great, big bone
For you and me to pick."

Then the little dog moral he scented a quarrel;
"Oh, no; my ma," said he,
"Told me I ought to 'void him who sought
To pick a bone with me."

So the wise dog stayed and his ma obeyed,
For he truly had found the reason
Of the big dog's bribe, who was one of that tribe
That delights in fights and treason.

And the little dog sage lived a good old age,
While he fed on pie and liver;
But the big dog squabbled on a bridge that wabbled,
And was drowned in the roaring river.

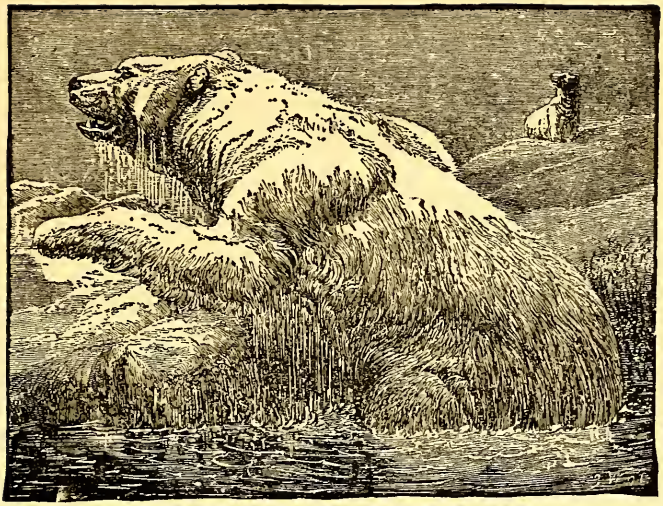


The Bluebell Fairies.

WHEN all is dark and quiet,
And nobody's about,
'Tis then the bluebell fairies
Come dancing softly out!

They first peep from the bluebells
To see that no one's there—
At us they might be frightened;
They don't mind Mr. Hare!

They tell him elfin stories
Of wonder and delight,
And creep, when morning wakens,
Back in the bluebells bright.



THE POLAR BEAR.

The polar bear, when he's at home,
  Lives among ice and snow;
You'll often find him, so I'm told,
  A-sitting on a floe.

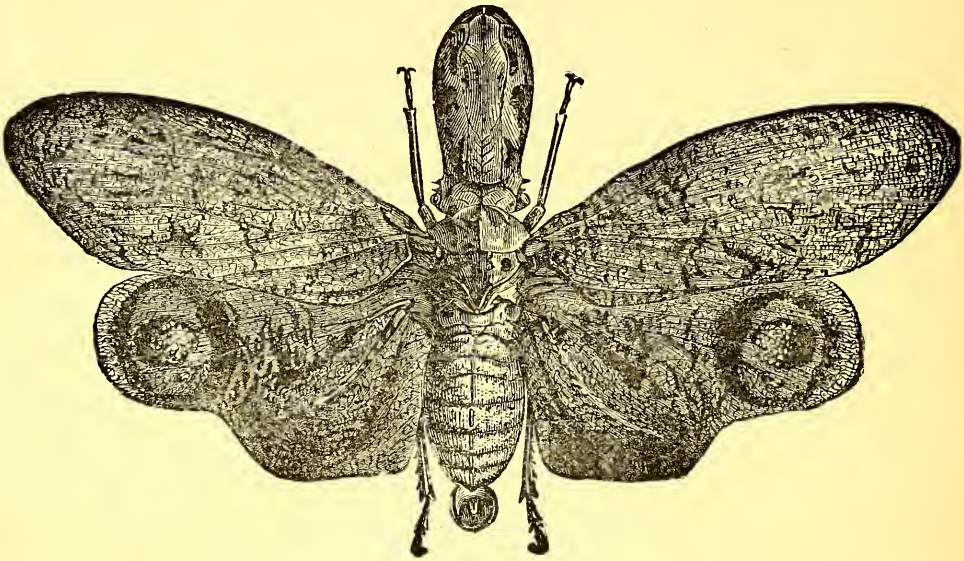
I don't know what a floe may be,
  It must be something queer;
They haven't got them at the shops
  Or anywhere round here.

And so the polar bear is sad,
  At least, he seems to be,
Because he hasn't any floes
  Where he can sit, you see.

He's very fond of fish; I think
  He thinks it's very nice,
But always, I suppose, he'd like
  To finish with an ice.

THE LANTERN-FLY.

EVERY little boy or girl who reads this has, no doubt, seen a fire-fly. How beautiful they are as they fly about among the trees and the flowers on a warm summer evening. But I wonder if any of you have ever seen a lantern-fly like this huge fellow who has had his picture taken for you. I hardly think you have ever seen him, because you would be obliged to go to China, or Guiana, or Brazil, or the West Indies, to get a sight of such a large fire-fly. Look on your map and see where these pretty creatures live, and fly



about the forests and the gardens, shining like torches. You have often seen Chinese lanterns, have you not? Very pretty they are too. You have seen them in parades and processions and sometimes on grounds where garden parties were playing games. Perhaps the Chinese, who are so accustomed to see these wonderful lantern-flies in their own forests and gardens, have learned to be very fond of such brilliant things, and that is the reason they invent

such gay lanterns in painted paper. They could not send their lantern-flies to you very easily, so they give you as good an imitation as they can make. Have you never seen the wonderful Chinese lanterns in the shape of flies and bugs?

But would you not like to know where the wonderful fire-fly keeps his light? It has rows of light on each side of its body, and sometimes it leaves a line of light behind it, but that is not very often the case. It is only in very warm countries that you can see the fire-fly in its greatest brilliancy. When the insect is flying, of course his wings do not cover his body, and in this way, his light can be seen, but when he folds his wings over his body, he hides his light. Travelers tell a great many wonderful things, and sometimes they tell what is not strictly true. A traveler who went to the West Indies before the natives had been driven out by the white settlers, says that when these natives went hunting or walking in the night, they would tie these immense lantern-flies to each great toe, so as to have light on their path, and when they went fishing, they would tie a great many together on the end of a pole, and in this way make torches which gave them plenty of light. The large lantern-flies will devour mosquitoes greedily, so you see he can be useful as well as ornamental. Do you not think it is a fine thing to be handsome and useful too? Try it, my little friend, and see.

Travelers often tell the story, and it is a very true story too, that the ladies of Brazil are in the habit of putting fire-flies in little bags of lace or gauze so that they cannot escape, and wearing them in their hair or in the folds and flounces of their evening dresses. These little creatures and the larger ones too, make a beautiful decoration for the ladies' dresses. Sometimes in the summer months, when the young people in Brazil have their festivities, persons galloping through the streets on horseback will have their own clothes and the horses, too, covered with these bags of fire-flies, so that as they dash through the town, they look like moving bodies of light. When you visit China and Brazil, or the West Indies, you see the largest and finest fire-flies and lantern-flies in the world.

NIGHT FLOWERS.

THERE are some flowers that never see the sun. One of the most curious is the "evening primrose." About six o'clock it suddenly bursts open, with a popping sound, and at six next morning closes.

If you watch that pretty flower, and listen, you can hear this strange performance.

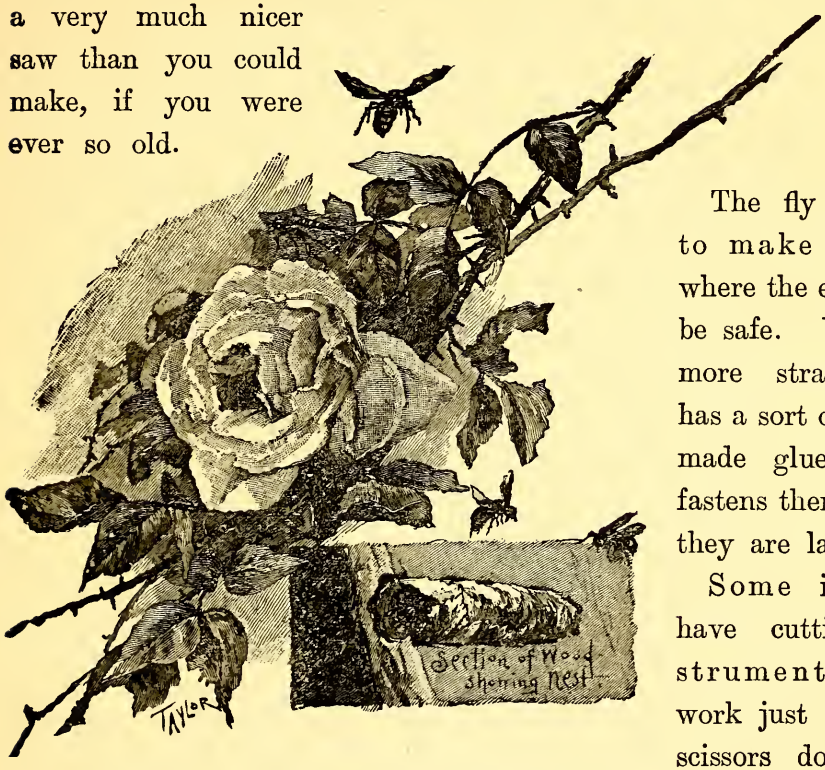
This is why it does so. The little calyx holds the petals in such a way that the moment it turns back they are let loose. At once it bursts out into full flower, with this funny noise, like a pop-gun.

So the "night-blooming cereus" blossoms in the night, only for an hour, giving out its sweet fragrance, and then dies. Just think of never seeing the sun at all!

In a far Eastern country there is a kind of jasmine called the "sorrowful tree." It droops as if sick in the daytime, and at night grows fresh and bright. It opens its lovely flowers with a very pleasant odor till morning, and then wilts and looks wretched again.

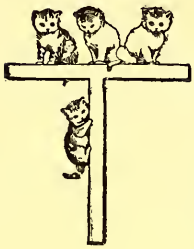
THE WORKING TOOLS OF INSECTS.

I WONDER if you know that the smallest insects you see about you have tools given them to do their work with. There is a little fly called a saw-fly, because it has a saw to work with. It is really a very much nicer saw than you could make, if you were ever so old.



The fly uses it to make places where the eggs will be safe. What is more strange, it has a sort of home-made glue which fastens them where they are laid.

Some insects have cutting instruments that work just as your scissors do. The poppy-bee is one of them, whose work is wonderful. This bee has a boring tool, too. Its nest is usually made in old wood. This borer cleans out the nest ready for use. When all is ready the insect cuts out pieces of leaves to line the nest and to make the cells. These linings are cut in the shape of the cells. You would be surprised to see the care taken to have every piece of just the right size, so that it will fit. When they are fitted, the pieces are nicely fastened together and put into the nest.

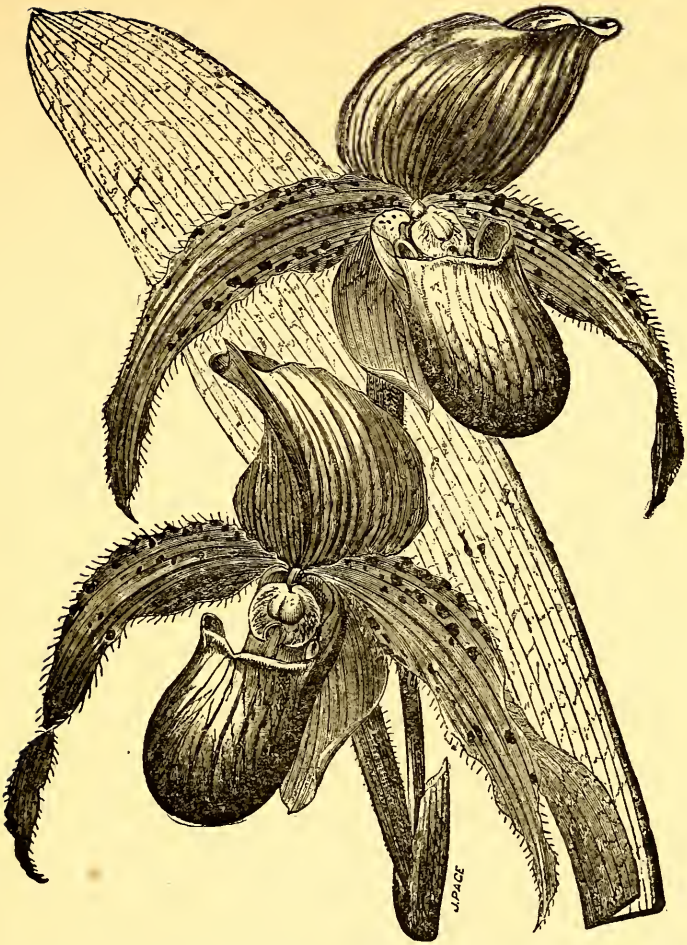


THE LADY'S SLIPPER.

THE lady's slipper is a very beautiful flower. It belongs to the family of orchids, and if you are a little boy or little girl who has heard older people talk about the wonderful and beautiful orchids which you can find in green-houses, and which florists show sometimes at fairs and other public places, you will be able to know something about what the word orchid means. They are the most showy flowers that can be found anywhere. In Japan the orchids grow very finely. Some are purple, some are red, some are spotted, some are striped, some are white with purple stripes, and others are purple with white stripes, but there is not one of these orchids which is not a very handsome flower. Some are spotted and tinted with yellow, with a deep crimson and purple at the edges. Would you not say that was a superb flower?

In a country named Sumatra, the orchids grow in great variety and in great beauty. Now, all these beautiful flowers are sisters, although they are not exactly alike, just as all roses are not alike and as you perhaps do not very much like your sister or brother, yet you both belong to the same family. The particular orchid which is named lady's slipper, is a fine plant with large downy leaves and flowers of a beautiful white and rose color. It grows from one to two feet high, and can be found in its wild state in North America. It blooms generally in May and June.

Look at the picture very carefully and see how closely it resembles a lady's slipper. Do you not think so? It looks very much



like the shoes knit of zephyr which your mamma wears in her chamber, and perhaps you have a pair too. I am sure you have seen bed-room slippers which look very much like this flower. The next time you visit a green-house be sure to ask to see the orchids, and I am sure you will say afterwards that you never knew of so many beautiful shades of color. You will find almost every color under the sun, in a large collection of orchids.

The lady's slipper, though not so showy as some of the orchids, is one of the most beautiful. The pretty rose and white slippers hang from the stem so gracefully, you almost feel tempted to put them on.

THE DRAGON-FLY.

The dragon-fly does not carry a lantern or a torch about with him like the fire-fly and the lantern-fly, but he is a very beautiful creature, and you will not need to go to tropical countries, like China and India and Brazil, to see him. It must be a very fine thing to have one pair of wings, so as to fly through the air, from garden to garden and from field to field, and to take very long trips without being obliged to go on a train or a boat or in a carriage. But what do you think of two pairs of wings? And yet the graceful dragon-fly has two pairs and he uses both pairs at the same time, just as you use your two feet. These wings, too, are often painted in colors of red and black and brown and yellow, and sometimes a delicate, shining blue, which looks like the precious stone called sapphire. They love the sun, and so they come in great numbers in the summer season. Have you never seen them flying around the tall tiger-lilies in the garden? And away they go sometimes into the forests, and they can be seen on the hedges and very often about the fruit trees in the orchard. But to these places they only make short visits, because they love to live near the water, skimming over the lake and the pond and the river. They are lighter than feathers, and when you are near a pond in the summer, you can find a great deal of pleasure in watching them as they fly here and there over the water. Their beautiful wings are as thin as gauze. You can easily see through them, and when you look at them closely, you wonder how such frail, delicate wings can support even as light a

body as the slender dragon-fly; but these four wings do a great deal of flying. Watch him on the pond, and see how seldom he rests; he loves to go all the time.

The front wings and the hind wings differ in coloring so he is all the handsomer for that. His legs are black with reddish thighs, and when he flies, the colors of his four wings and his legs and his bright brown eyes shine in the sunlight, till you might almost believe that a very beautiful piece of jewelry was flying about. But although he is a handsome fellow, he is a great tyrant on the water, and the poor little insects, like the gnats and midges, he devours without a grain of salt. Some of them carry a sting too, and poor animals dread them very much. Indead the dragon-fly devours smaller insects so greedily that he is called dragon for that reason. In olden times which you will read about when you are older, there were a great many stories about the terrible dragons who devoured people. These stories were fables or untrue stories, but the dragon-fly got his name from these cruel monsters that devoured everything that came within their reach.

A FIDDLER.

THE SKATERS

When Mrs. Bear went out to skate,
Papa's top-hat went skating, too:
Bear Minor and his sister Kate
(Who wore a muff and muffler blue)
Went far ahead across the ice,
And laughed and shouted, "This is nice!"

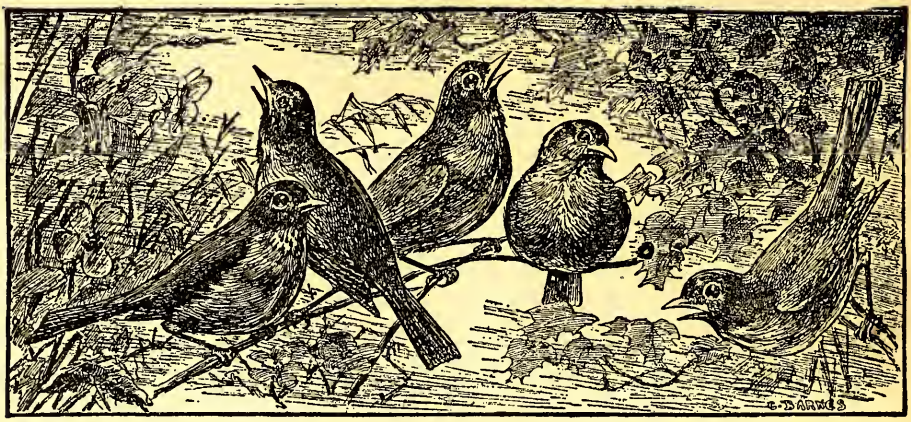
JACK FROST

THE earth was dressed one winter's night
In all its best of spotless white;
Jack Frost it was whose magic hand
Had turned it thus to Fairyland.

With coats so warm and boots so stout
Next morn the children started out,
Their rosy faces all aglow,
To see the sparkling ice and snow.

They reached the frozen pond at last,
And on it soon were skating fast;
For all the water there was lost
And turned to ice by old Jack Frost.

They made the most of ice and snow,
Jack Frost so seldom comes, you know;
But when he does, the children say
They only wish he had come to stay!



TIPSY, TOPSY, TEE.

HALF-A-DOZEN little girls
Playing a game, I see.
They whirl a ring; I hear them sing,
"Tipsy, topsy, tee!"

Then — "Here's a king arriving!" —
That's how it sounds to me,
Though there's no crown nor ermine gown
For tipsy, topsy, tee!

All hands in line, a pretty row,
Then bow and courtesy!
One makes a choice, and every voice
Sings, "Tipsy, topsy, tee!"

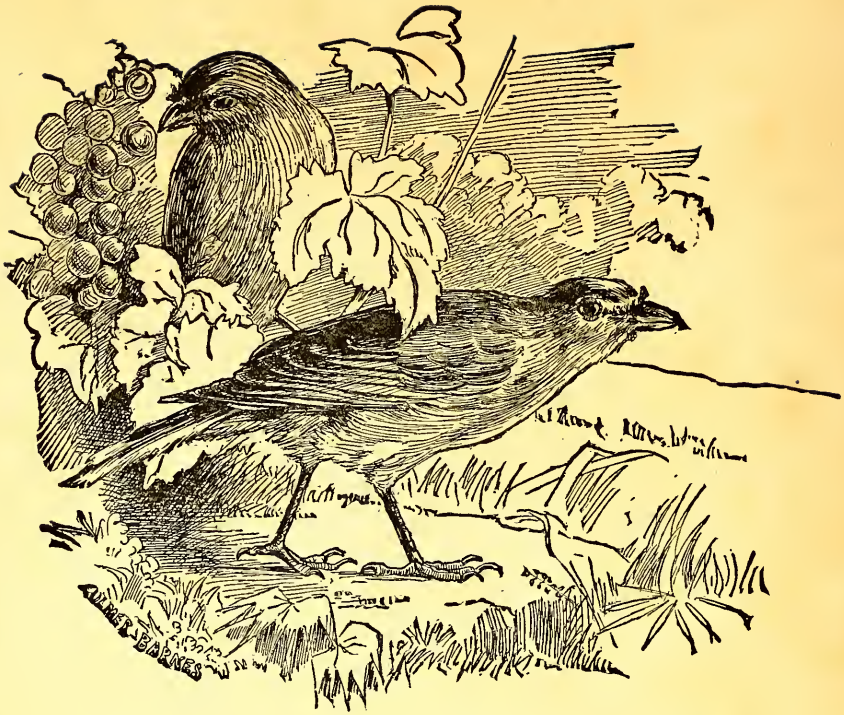
More kings arrive — the curly heads —
I've counted two or three,
And they're all so gay, I like the play
Of tipsy, topsy, tee.

THE ENGLISH CUCKOO.

THE English cuckoo "sings as she flies," and the English people are glad to hear its voice, "Cuck-oo! cuck-oo!" because it tells them that the spring has come; but no good children can like its mean, ugly ways.

The mother does not build a nest of her own, as all respectable birds should do, but lays her eggs in the nest of some other bird much smaller than herself.

When the young cuckoo is hatched, before it has feathers, or even gets its eyes open, it feels around to see if there is anything else in the nest; if it finds eggs, it manages to push them over the side of its stolen home. If a young bird is there, perhaps its own sister or brother, the naughty cuckoo works its body under the helpless creature, and by dint of backing and pushing, contrives to get the poor thing out of the nest; down it goes on the ground and is killed, unless the nest is low; then it becomes chilled and dies. Over and over again the murderer slaughters its victims until it is left alone in the nest. "Such a mean, selfish, disagreeable bird!" you say. I agree with you, but there are *children* who would like to keep everything for themselves, too.



THE GARDEN BIRD.

In New Guinea there is a bird which not only builds a house but has a garden too. He is known by the name of Garden Bird.

When he is going to build, the Garden Bird first looks for a level spot of ground which has a shrub in the centre. Then he covers the bottom of the stem of this shrub with a heap of moss. Next he brings small green twigs from other plants; these he sticks in the ground so that they lean against his shrub. On one side he leaves a place open for the door. The twigs keep on growing so that his little cavern is like a bower.

Last of all, in front of the door, the bird makes a lawn of moss. Upon this lawn he scatters purple berries and pink flowers, and these he always keeps fresh.

He is about as large as a thrush or black bird. His head, his back, his wings and tail are brown, and beneath he is greenish-red.